My Idea of EDUCATION

Swami Vivekananda

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Swami Vivekananda, the great spiritual luminary, thinker, and patriot-prophet of our times, had many deep and insightful ideas on education. As time passes, his far-reaching vision of education is influencing an increasing number of thoughtful people the world over. Recognizing his contribution, UNESCO has acknowledged Swami Vivekananda as one of the eminent educationists of the world.

Over the years a few books have come out presenting the Swami's thoughts on education. Sometime ago, Dr. Kiran Walia, Reader in Education, National Council of Educational Research and Training, selected from these sources some of the principal thoughts of the Swami on education and classified them into topics. We have built on this through careful editing as also the addition of relevant quotes, giving the references from *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*.

To give the readers at the outset a synoptic view of the Swami's thoughts and the Swami himself, we have included two additional write-ups. The first is a monograph by Swami Prabhananda, the present General Secretary and a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order. Written at UNESCO's behest, it focuses on Swami Vivekananda's contribution to educational ideas. It was published in UNESCO's Prospects (Volume XXXIII, Number 2, June 2003) and is reproduced here with the permission of the author. The second article is by Swami Yatiswarananda (1889–1966), who was a Vice-president of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission.

We are thankful to Prof. J. S. Rajput for writing a valuable Preface to this book and the interest he showed in this project. We hope that the book will serve as a handbook for students, teachers, parents, and all educationists, and inspire them to imbibe, and also impart, true education.

Kolkata
12 June 2008

PUBLISHER

PREFACE

One rarely comes across divinely enlightened and blessed individuals who precisely perceive and present a prophetic picture of the future. They are capable of envisioning the past, the present, and the future in continuity. Their ideas survive the boundaries of time and space. Swami Vivekananda was one such gift of God to humanity. He dedicated himself to the welfare of the entire humanity, and also spread the message of the essential unity of all faiths and religions, and the need for spiritual pursuits for achieving higher goals of human life.

Swami Vivekananda presented the true India to the whole world. The concept of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*—the world is one family—is the only beacon light for survival, growth, and real progress for human society, particularly in the strife-torn world of today. It was perceived in India in ancient times by our learned sages and saints and has an eternal validity. Swami Vivekananda explained and elaborated it in the global context. What a superhuman articulation and presentation he bestowed on all of us! The whole world was mesmerized and began to look towards India, to explore and learn about its past glory. The basic tenets of the Indian tradition of creation, generation and dissemination of knowledge were expanded in tune with the requirements and needs of the times. At the present juncture of history, when the concept of a global village is being discussed all around, there is a greater need to acquire a subtle understanding of the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda

on learning to live together and on universal brotherhood. Widespread awareness of his thoughts and ideas amongst teachers and would-be teachers is particularly important as they have the responsibility of educating the young.

Swami Vivekananda's ideas on various aspects of education are more relevant and are needed more today than probably during his own life time. Only he had the vision and the courage to articulate: "The true education, however, is not yet conceived of amongst us." Every time I recall this statement to myself or repeat it to an audience of teachers and teacher educators, I find it more and more motivating, evolving, and expanding. It exhorts everyone to strive hard, explore, discover, interpret and utilize all their talents for the benefit of young learners. His ideas elevate everyone who reads and understands the meaning and the imperatives. They are capable of transforming the perception of teachers. Imagine the shape of education once every teacher starts adoring the inherent divinity of each child in the temples of learning.

Over the last decade, I have vehemently pleaded the need for enhanced emphasis on value inculcation, nurturance, and development. Further, education must impart the awareness and knowledge of the basics of all the religions of the people of India. Religions are not the only source of values, but they are a major source of values. This alone is the positive and correct interpretation of secularism in the multireligious society that India is. Let me quote Swami Vivekananda: "If you attempt to get the secular knowledge without religion, I tell you plainly, vain is your attempt in India; it will never have a hold on the people".

On umpteen occasions, I found answers in the works of Swami Vivekananda to my own queries and concerns on various aspects of education. It gradually became uppermost in my mind that every teacher needs to be aware of the thoughts of

Swami Vivekananda on education. I suggested to my colleague Dr. Kiran Walia to procure a personal copy of the collected works of Swami Vivekananda along with other relevant and useful writings of others on him and about him. The idea was to prepare a concise yet comprehensive publication mainly for the use of teachers and teacher educators. It took some time. Several eminent scholars have given valuable suggestions which have definitely enhanced the quality of the contents. The late Swami Gokulanandaji, the then Head of the Ramakrishna Mission Centre in Delhi, suggested that the manuscript be sent to Swami Suhitanandaji, presently Assistant Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission at the Headquarters at Belur Math in West Bengal, and the latter gave several valuable suggestions during the editing stage. We believe that the inclusion of the contributions of Swami Yatiswaranandaji and Swami Prabhanandaji at the beginning will be of great help to the readers in comprehending the essence of the thoughts of Swami Vivekananda. It gives me a sense of satisfaction that my suggestion has taken shape. I express my gratitude to all concerned. It is my fond hope that the teaching community will not only peruse through this book, but also study and teach it sincerely to their students for the benefit of the youth of India, on whom Swami Vivekananda pinned his great hopes for the rejuvenation and re-building of a glorious India. We may recall his prophetic utterance in this context: "Let us all work hard, my brethren; this is no time for sleep. On our work depends the coming of the India of the future. She is there, ready, waiting. She is only sleeping. Arise and awake and see her seated on her eternal throne, rejuvenated, more glorious than she ever was—this motherland of ours."

Professor J.S. Rajput
Chairperson, National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE) (1994-1999) & Director, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) (1999-2004)

SECTION 1 : INTRODUCTION

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA THE EDUCATIONIST PAR EXCELLENCE

Swami Vivekananda—His Life and Personality

A regal, majestic figure of commanding presence, vast learning and deep insight, Swami Vivekananda was barely 30 years old when he created a stir at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893. Three and a half years later, when he returned to India, his homeland, he was as a colossus of strength, courage, confidence, love, and manliness—the embodiment of the ideal of the 'man-making and character-building' education he propagated.

Swami Vivekananda was born Narendranath Datta on 12 January 1863 in Kolkata, in a respectable middle-class family. His father, Vishwanath Datta, was an attorney, and a lover of arts and literature. Although liberal-minded, Vishwanath was skeptical about religious practices. On the other hand, Narendra's mother, Bhuvaneshwari Devi, was a pious, kind-hearted lady, devoted to the Hindu traditions. The influence of each of his parents on Narendra was different, yet together they provided a congenial atmosphere for the precocious boy to grow into an energetic young man with high ideals.

During his formative years, he developed extraordinary mental abilities which some people either misunderstood or ignored, but which others appreciated and recognized as signs of an outstanding individual. As a child he liked to play at meditation and would easily become engrossed. Once when he

was seated thus in meditation along with some of his friends, the sudden appearance of a cobra slithering across the floor drove all the children out of the room except Narendra, who remained absorbed in meditation.

Narendra's power of concentration—of fixing his mind on one thing while detaching it from everything else—was remarkable. In his later life he once shot in succession, twelve eggshells bobbing up and down on the water of a river, although he had never fired a gun before! No less striking was his self-control. He remained calm and unruffled, no matter how dramatic the situation he was in.

Ever since childhood, Narendra had great admiration for wandering monks, and he liked to think that one day he himself would become a monk. But his ambition only became evident during his college days at the Scottish Church College. He began to search out scholars and spiritual leaders in order to question them. But none of them could satisfy him. It was from Prof. William Hastie, principal of his college that he heard for the first time of Sri Ramakrishna, the saint of Dakshineswar. His meeting with Sri Ramakrishna in November 1881 proved to be a turning point in his life. About this meeting, Narendranath said:

> He [Sri Ramakrishna] looked just like an ordinary man, with nothing remarkable about him. He used the most simple language and I thought, 'Can this man be a great teacher?'—I crept near to him and asked him the question which I had been asking others all my life: 'Do you believe in God, Sir?' 'Yes,' he replied. 'Can you prove it, Sir?' 'Yes.' 'How?' 'Because I see Him just as I see you here, only in a much intenser sense.' That impressed me at once. … I began to go to that man, day after day, and I actually saw that religion could be given. One touch, one glance, can change a whole life.[1]

Sri Ramakrishna's life was one of spiritual experience and achievement. He also discovered some truths of great significance to all of us today. About this Sri Ramakrishna said:

> I have practiced all religions—Hinduism, Islam, Christianity—and I have also followed the paths of the different Hindu sects. I have found that it is the same God towards whom all are directing their steps, though along different paths.[2]

Sri Ramakrishna carefully guided Narendra and a band of other young dedicated disciples, and the Master chose Narendra as the leader of the group. After the Master's passing away, these young devotees gathered together in a dilapidated house in Baranagore, a northern suburb of Kolkata, which became the first centre of the Ramakrishna Order. With a total rejection of material possessions and an unshakable commitment to their Master and his teachings, they endured unbelievable privations and devoted themselves to spiritual practices.

Travelling throughout the length and breadth of India, mostly on foot, Narendra was trying to work out a purpose for his life. While on the road, he often faced starvation and frequently found himself with nowhere to stay. To Narendra, this was an opportunity to study India and its needs at first hand. He observed that his country possessed a priceless spiritual heritage, but had failed to reap its benefit. The weak points were poverty, caste, neglect of the masses, oppression of women and a faulty system of education. How was India to be regenerated? He came to the conclusion:

> We have to give back to the nation its lost individuality and raise the masses. … Again, the force to raise them must come from inside.[3]

Narendranath Datta had by this time been transformed into Swami Vivekananda, and he had found his life's mission. Taking a broad look at the early part of his life we can see that there were four influences that formed his personality and philosophy:

1. India was then under British rule and was experiencing an upheaval in its cultural life. British rule had brought India into the world community, and English education and modernization had brought new hope. Yet, reflecting on the actual result of all this, Vivekananda said, 'A few hundred, modernised, half-educated, and denationalised men are all that there is to show of modern English India—nothing else.'[4] In his youth, Narendra 'became fascinated with the Evolutionism of Herbert Spencer,' and 'translated Spencer's book on 'Education' into Bengali for Gurudas Chattopadhyaya, his publisher.'[5] It is also said that Narendra exchanged correspondence with Herbert Spencer for some time.[6] But, alongside his study of Spencer and other Western philosophers, he also delved deep into Indian Sanskrit scriptures.

2. Sri Ramakrishna, the saint of Dakshineswar, had a profound influence on his contemporaries who were considered the builders of modern India. He was practically illiterate and spoke in a rustic dialect, yet the spiritual depth and power of his teachings impressed intellectual giants such as Friederich Max Muller. In Swami Vivekananda's estimation, his Master fully harmonized the intellectual, emotional, ethical, and spiritual elements of a human being and was the role model for the future.

3. Swami Vivekananda's family also provided a strong moral and cultural foundation to his life. Due in great part to

his upbringing, his tastes were eclectic and his interests wide. In fact, the desire for knowledge that he had acquired in his youth prompted him later to gather as much as he could wherever he was—whether in India or in the West.

4. Equally important, if not more so, was the Swami's knowledge of India based on his first-hand experiences acquired during his wanderings throughout the country. His pilgrimages transformed him. He became a true lover of humanity and became endowed with the quality of *sarvabhutahite ratāh* (being devoted to the welfare of all beings).[7]

At about the same time that Vivekananda completed his tour of India, he was asked to represent Hinduism at the World's Parliament of Religions, to be held that year (1893) in Chicago. Vivekananda also felt that this might give him an opportunity to do something for his country. So he agreed to go. When the Parliament of Religions convened in September 1893, Vivekananda created a sensation. While other delegates spoke of their own faiths and creeds, Vivekananda spoke of the God of all, the source and essence of every faith. His call for religious harmony and acceptance of all religions brought him great acclaim. When the Parliament was over, he went on a lecture tour in the Midwest and the East coast of the United States. People in large numbers, particularly intellectuals, came to hear him speak wherever he went, thus fulfilling his Master's prediction that he would some day become a 'world teacher.'

Vivekananda's tour of the United States also had a revitalizing effect on India. Previously, those who had gone to the West from India were full of apologies for the state of their country. He was not. He always spoke about his country with

pride and respect. Thus, his work in the West instilled self-respect and self-confidence in the Indian psyche and helped India in its search for identity. It also helped to overcome the stereotypes and deep-rooted prejudices about India in Westerners' minds.

After giving up his lecture tour, the Swami started giving free classes on Vedanta and Yoga in New York. This resulted in the founding of the Vedanta Society there. In the summer of 1895 he sailed for England at the invitation of E. T. Sturdy and Henrietta Muller. His lectures there were quite successful. In December 1895 Vivekananda returned to the United States, where he continued his classes in New York and also lectured in other cities, and then returned to Europe again in April 1896. In May 1896, the Swami met Max Muller and his wife at Oxford. At the end of December 1896, Vivekananda sailed to India from Europe.

When the news broke that Swami Vivekananda was returning to India, people all over the country prepared to give him a hero's welcome. The Swami arrived in South India in January 1897 accompanied by three of his Western disciples. Wherever he went, addresses of welcome were presented and multitudes gathered to see him. In Vivekananda's response to these addresses, he indicated that he had a plan in mind to help uplift the masses. In fact, as early as 24 December 1894, he had written in a letter:

> My whole ambition in life is to set in motion a machinery which will bring noble ideas to the door of everybody, and then let men and women settle their own fate.[8]

On 1 May 1897, a few months after his return to Kolkata, the Swami set his plan in motion when he founded the Ramakrishna Mission. This was the beginning of an organized movement to help the suffering masses through educational,

cultural, medical and relief work. Within a few weeks of the founding of the Ramakrishna Mission, one of Swami Vivekananda's brother disciples, Swami Akhandananda, was passing through Murshidabad in Bengal and was struck by the pitiful condition of the people there, who were suffering from a famine. He immediately started relief work. Since then the Ramakrishna Mission has continued to come to the aid of those suffering from natural or man-made calamities.

It may not be out of place to mention that in a speech made in 1993, Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO, stated:

> I am indeed struck by the similarity of the constitution of the Ramakrishna Mission which Vivekananda established as early as 1897 with that of UNESCO drawn up in 1945. Both place the human being at the centre of their efforts aimed at development. Both place tolerance at the top of the agenda for building peace and democracy. Both recognize the variety of human cultures and societies as an essential aspect of the common heritage.[9]

About two years after Vivekananda's return to India, the centre, which his brother disciples had managed while he was in the West, was transferred to a large piece of land at Belur, across the river from Kolkata. This became the headquarters of the Ramakrishna Mission. Vivekananda emphasized that the aim of the mission was 'man-making', and he wanted it eventually to develop a university as part of its mission. About this time the Swami received a letter requesting him to head the Research Institute of Science that Sir Jamshedji Tata had set up, but he declined the offer as it conflicted with his spiritual interests.[10]

In June 1899, he returned to Europe with one of his brother disciples and also Sister Nivedita, an Irish disciple. After a

short stay in London, Vivekananda sailed for New York. A few months later he left for California where a series of lectures and classes led to the founding of the Vedanta Society in San Francisco. He eventually returned to New York, but in July 1900 went to Paris, where he stayed for three months. During this time he participated in the Congress of the History of Religions held in connection with the Universal Exposition.

The Swami returned to Kolkata on 9 December 1900. For the most part he spent his last days at the Belur centre, training his young followers and guiding the organization. He expected his followers to be exemplars of an ideal type of human being, and he inspired them by saying:

> Tell me what you have done. Couldn't you give away one life for the sake of others?... Let this body go in the service of others—and then I shall know you have not come to me in vain![11]

On 4 July 1902, he was more vigorous than he had been for a long time, and he busied himself with various activities. In the evening he meditated and left his body, as he himself had predicted, in a high yogic state. He was only 39 years old.

Education—What It Means

Sister Nivedita used to say that those who knew Swami Vivekananda understood that he was one who had experienced in his own life all the truths about which he spoke. This is equally valid when he addressed the subject of education. Swamiji knew that education plays a vital role in curing the evils in society, and is critical in shaping the future of humanity. Although Vivekananda did not write a book on education, he contributed valuable thoughts on the subject that are relevant and viable today. In order to understand his thoughts, we should first consider his oft-quoted definition of

education: 'Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.'[12]

Vivekananda's definition of education is one of remarkable insight. First of all, the word 'manifestation' implies that something already exists and is waiting to be expressed. The main focus in learning is to make the hidden ability of a learner manifest. As Vivekananda said, 'what a man "learns" is really what he "discovers", by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge.'[13] According to the Vedanta philosophy, knowledge is inherent in a human being, like a spark in a piece of flint, and all that is needed is the strike of suggestion to bring it out. 'Manifestation' indicates spontaneous growth, provided the impediments, if any, are removed.

Next in importance in the Swami's definition of education is the expression 'already in man.' This refers to a human being's potential, which is the range of the abilities and talents, known or unknown that he is born with. 'Potential' speaks of the possibility of awakening something that is lying dormant. Israel Scheffler, in his book *Of Human Potential*, considers three aspects of this:

(a) *the capacity* to acquire a specific characteristic or to become someone who possesses it. For instance, we might say, 'Amal has the capacity to become a Maradona, the world-famous soccer player';
(b) *the propensity* is an attribute which indicates what a person is likely to do when the opportunity comes and freedom of choice is available. It suggests something about a person's motivation. For example, Rabindranath Tagore's propensity, expressed in his *Gitanjali*, indicates his strong aspiration to discover the wonder behind this creation; and

(c) *the capability* means a person's motivation and efficiency in working towards an intended outcome. It refers to something more than a person's capacity to perform. Rather, it is a person's strength and capacity to get rid of obstacles to his learning—such as lack of motivation or obstacles in his environment.

Thus, these three concepts—capacity, propensity and capability—emphasize three aspects of education, respectively:

(a) That which makes learning possible;
(b) The development of learning; and
(c) Self-development or self-empowerment.

A child has many potentials of variable worth, and they may create mental conflict within him. Therefore, he has to learn to choose which he should try to develop, and which he should minimize, counter, or ignore. Then again, as his chosen potentials start to unfold, they should be supervized in order to achieve their harmonious and purposeful development.

The word 'perfection' in the Swami's definition of education is also very significant. We can see that every act connected with learning, training, etc., is part of a process directed towards an end. The English word 'perfect' implies completion, or something being made whole. The Greek word *teleics* is translated as 'perfect', and suggests the idea of attaining a goal or an end. Drawing on these meanings, one may conclude that perfection in educational parlance is the goal of actualizing the highest human potential.

The Goal of Education

The goal of education—general or ultimate—is essentially laid down by society and therefore varies from society to society. Even as every society tries to keep pace with the con-

temporary world, societies with a stable and older tradition cherish some higher goals of everlasting value. Taking into consideration the vast experience of the Indian civilization, Vivekananda's use of the word 'perfection' needs to be viewed at two levels:

1. 'Perfection' in the metaphysical sense implies the realization of the soul's own ever-perfect nature. The Vedanta philosophy says that a human being is not born a sinner, nor is he necessarily a victim of circumstances. The main cause of his suffering is his ignorance of his true nature. Explaining the implications of this, Vivekananda once said:

> The Light Divine within is obscured in most people. It is like a lamp in a cask of iron, no gleam of light can shine through. Gradually, by purity and unselfishness, we can make the obscuring medium less and less dense, until at last it becomes transparent as glass.[14]

2. At the empirical level, the concept of 'perfection' has to address the various problems human beings encounter in society. As Swami Vivekananda said:

> The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a lion—is it worth the name? Real education is that which enables one to stand on one's own legs.[15]

Education, he said, must provide 'life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas.'[16] The ideal of this type of education would be to produce an integrated person—one who has learned how to improve his intellect, purify his emotions, and stand firm on moral virtues and unselfishness.

There are two levels of values designated by the ancient Indian scriptures, *parā vidyā* (spiritual values) and *aparā vidyā* (secular values). This division is merely for practical convenience; otherwise *vidyā*, or learning, is a continuum, leading one towards the ultimate goal which according to Vivekananda is complete freedom of the soul.

Vivekananda also observed that, if education is to serve the entire human being, in all his or her dimensions, the pursuit of knowledge will be a lifelong process. Even an illustrious person like Sri Ramakrishna said, from his own experience, 'As long as I live, so long do I learn.' At the empirical level, today's knowledge explosion can keep people engaged for their entire lives. Therefore, education must be considered a continuous and lifelong process.

Education and Social Justice

So far, our discussion of Vivekananda's ideas on education has been a simplistic analysis centring round his definition of education. However, this fails to do justice to some of his ideas on related issues, such as the relationship between education and society, between education and the teacher, between the professed goals of education and the goals actually achieved, and so forth. It is apparent, therefore, that Vivekananda's deep concern for social justice has not been so far reflected in our definition.

To this end, we can probe further into the expressions 'manifestation' and 'already in man,' bearing in mind the situation in India in those days. In explaining the term 'manifestation,' the Swami quoted part of one of the yoga aphorisms of Patanjali (4.3)—*Tatah kshetrikavat* (therefore the obstructions)—that is to say, just as a farmer breaks the barriers to a course of water, which thereafter flows by its own force to irrigate his fields, so also a person's inherent power will

spontaneously manifest itself when external and internal obstacles, if any, are removed at the proper time by the teachers or the education system. Such obstacles are of various kinds. External obstacles might be in the form of unfair distribution of educational resources and opportunities, inequalities in economic development and socio-political instability; whereas internal obstacles might have to do with the dynamics of the education system, such as the teacher-student relationship, the student's capacity to make personal judgements or to adapt to changes, and the student's mental or physical capacities.

In order to tackle these obstacles, the education system should take on two responsibilities:

(a) It should help a person build a healthy and dynamic frame of mind to enable him to meet the challenges of life; and
(b) It should try to prevent, through proper training of its present students, any future evils in people and society which are likely to further complicate the problems of human beings.

At the same time, however, the teachers and the designers of education systems must always keep in mind the Vedantic idea that whatsoever good or bad impressions a mind carries, a human being is essentially pure and divine, and a repository of immense possibilities.

In Vivekananda's view, educational concerns related to a person's interaction with society should receive due attention. The purpose of society is to help secure the well-being of human beings. In reality, however, human beings frequently find themselves entrapped in a society that threatens their freedom, a freedom essential for their educational growth. An ideal society, according to Vivekananda, should provide the resources as well as the opportunity for each of its members to

develop his or her potential to the maximum. Education must embrace the whole society, with special attention to those who are most in need of it and who, for one reason or another, are unable to avail themselves of the existing facilities.

Training the Mind

Vivekananda concurred with contemporary thinkers when he asserted that the mind—the chief instrument of learning—deserves more attention than it had earlier received. Training the mind should be a student's highest priority, and not simply the accumulation, the memorizing and the repeating of facts. In the long run, stuffing one's mind with information, technical skills and useless trivia only creates more problems if one's mind is not nourished and strengthened and made healthy. Yet training of the mind in all its aspects is conspicuously absent in today's education.

Learning to concentrate the mind was the focus in the Swami's scheme. He said:

> To me the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collecting of facts.[17]

In doing anything—such as thinking, working with the hands, etc.—the better the power of concentration the better the outcome will be. And this power of keeping the mind on the task can be improved. Training the mind to concentrate on a specific subject has several stages, the primary one being learning how to collect the mind and preventing it from running hither and thither. The student trains his mind to be more attentive and more 'mindful.'

Next, the student must learn how to detach his mind from distractions that impose themselves in spite of himself. Then, simultaneously, he must direct the mind to the desired subject and focus the full force of his mind on it. To give an example:

a convex lens gathers sunlight and focuses it on one point to burn a piece of paper. Likewise, when a mind becomes concentrated, it acquires tremendous power and is able to unlock the mysteries of the subject it is focused upon.

Similarly, the Swami also wanted students to cultivate will-power. According to him, will-power is developed when 'the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful.'[18] Will-power is necessary not only to conduct the learning process, but also to strengthen one's character.

Culture and Education—The Teacher and the Pupil

Every society has its outer aspect called 'civilization,' and also its inner aspect called 'culture.' In both of these a child is moulded and educated so that the beliefs and practices of his forefathers are carried on and not forgotten. Nevertheless, as Vivekananda says:

> It is culture that withstands shocks, not a simple mass of knowledge. ... Knowledge is only skin-deep, as civilization is, and a little scratch brings out the old savage.[19]

A society is forever adding to its learning and culture. To the brilliant mind of T. S. Eliot, education was but a manifestation of culture. He said, 'The purpose of education, it seems, is to transmit culture; so culture is likely to be limited to what can be transmitted by education.'[20]

Similarly, Vivekananda observed that, through education, a child becomes cultured and his behaviour is moulded accordingly, and he is thus guided towards his eventual role in society. In this process, several agents—such as his parents, peers and teachers—assist him. But nowadays, as formal education has become more and more institutionalized, teachers are expected to play a more significant role. A teacher needs to help a student learn how to think, what to think, how to

discriminate and how to appreciate things. This is not just a matter of intellectual manipulation. This kind of teaching requires moral conviction and the courage to continuously pursue one's own course at all costs. The teacher must not only possess the knowledge he is to transmit to the student, but he must also know how to transmit it. And in addition to the content of the teaching, what the teacher gives or transfers, to be truly effective, must possess some other elements. For instance, the teacher should share with the students the conviction that they are both truly one Spirit—at the same time cultivating in the student, a feeling of dignity and self respect.[21] As Vivekananda said:

> The only true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the student, and transfer his soul to the student's soul and see through the student's eyes and hear through his ears and understand through his mind. Such a teacher can really teach and none else.[22]

In a favourable ambience such as this 'the process of uncovering'[23] the veil of ignorance works smoothly.

On the student's side, in order to facilitate manifestation of his innate strength and knowledge, he should cultivate the spirit of *śraddhā*—that is, faith in himself, humility, submission and veneration for the teacher. This is also necessary to create a favourable environment for learning. The *Taittiriya Upanishad* (1.11.2) gives the instruction: *Āchārya devo bhava*—let the teacher be your *deva* (i.e. a person fit to be worshipped or highly honoured). The teacher-pupil relationship, based on respect and mutual trust, is the cornerstone of the edifice of Vivekananda's scheme of education. The Upanishads also advocate this. Before starting the lesson, the teacher and the pupils were to pray together so that they would mutually benefit and be strengthened by the teaching/learning process.

Character Education and Universal Values

Vivekananda's guru, Sri Ramakrishna, used to say that *mānush* needs to become *mān-hush*—that is, a man needs to become a true man. 'He alone is a man,' he said, 'whose spiritual consciousness has been awakened'.[24] Following his Master, Vivekananda emphasized that 'the ideal of all education, all training, should be this man-making.' Lamenting over the prevailing system of education, he said:

> ... we are always trying to polish up the outside. What use in polishing up the outside when there is no inside? The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow.[25]

In order to rectify the defects in the existing system, man's limited view of himself, on which the existing system of education is based, needs to be reconsidered. A human being is not simply a composite of body and mind. He is something more. According to the Vedanta philosophy, a human being has five sheaths, or coverings: the physical sheath, the vital sheath, the mental sheath, the intellectual sheath, and the blissful sheath. Today's education can at best touch the first four sheaths, but not the last one. Secular knowledge, skills, and moral values may take care of the first four sheaths, but spiritual knowledge is essential for the fifth. Moreover, it should be noted that the fifth sheath is the reservoir of bliss, knowledge, and strength, and all the sheaths are activated by the fifth.

There is no doubt that today's education neglects training of the mind in all its aspects, but it also neglects the spiritual side of human beings. People's minds are not directed to higher pursuits of life with the result that their hidden potentials are not revealed. Only when wisdom, peace, strength, unselfishness, loving concern for others and other virtues

become evident is a person transformed from a sensuous being to a true human being.

A tremendous explosion of knowledge without commensurate wisdom, plus immense power not tempered with discrimination, has made education today a potential source of danger. This is a serious problem looming large on humanity's horizon. As Vivekananda observed:

> Intellect has been cultured with the result that hundreds of sciences have been discovered, and their effect has been that the few have made slaves of the many—that is all the good that has been done. Artificial wants have been created; and every poor man, whether he has money or not, desires to have those wants satisfied, and when he cannot, he struggles, and dies in the struggle.[26]

In order to counterbalance this uneven development, Vivekananda strongly recommended the adoption of a 'spiritual and ethical culture,' and he looked upon 'religion as the innermost core of education.'[27] But by 'religion' he did not mean any particular religion. Religion to him meant the true eternal principles that inspire every religion. This is what touches the heart and has the potential to effect desirable changes in one's motivation. It also gives mental strength and broadness of outlook. Discussing the practical implications of morality, Swami Vivekananda once observed:

> What is meant by morality? Making the subject strong by attuning it to the Absolute, so that finite nature ceases to have control over us.[28]

Thus, in order to be worthwhile and effective, education must be rooted in religion—or, to be precise, in the science of spirituality, and evidently not in dogma.

Character-building was fundamental in Vivekananda's educational scheme, as against career-orientation, which occupies centre-stage in today's education. A person is what his thoughts have made him. Explaining this the Swami said, 'Each thought is a little hammer blow on the lump of iron which our bodies are, manufacturing out of it what we want it to be.'[29] That is why one finds that the focus of the Swami's educational thoughts was on assimilation of man-making, character-building ideas.

Everything a person does, every thought, every move, leaves an impression on the mind. Even when it is not outwardly apparent, it is strong enough to work beneath the surface. A person's character is determined by the sum total of these impressions. When a large number of these impressions come together, they form a habit. This then becomes a powerful force, for character is but repeated habits. This is why, through the acquisition and repetition of desirable habits, one's character can be remodelled.

The people one associates with, good or bad, contribute much to the development of one's character. In fact, their impact is greater than that of didactic teaching. That is why Swami Vivekananda said: 'Words, even thoughts, contribute only one-third of the influence in making an impression; the man, two-thirds.'[30] He therefore desired that the teacher's life and personality should be like a blazing fire which could have a positive influence on the pupils in his care. Exposure to exemplary role models, particularly when they are teachers, and also to wholesome curriculum materials that impart culturally-approved values to the young, is critical to character education.

Character-building education might focus on teaching what is right and wrong. But simultaneously, or alternatively, it should teach how to decide what is right and wrong. It

has been rightly argued that participation in discussions of morality is more instructive than simply hearing about it. In any case, teachers should be moral exemplars if the classroom and the school are to serve as arenas for the teaching of ethics. The students then have the experience of being part of a group of people who take moral values seriously, and this helps them imbibe moral values spontaneously.

The present education system has overemphasized the cultivation of the intellect at the cost of the general well-being of humanity. To check this dangerous trend, Vivekananda strongly recommended all-round development of human beings. In one of his lectures he expressed the desire 'that all men were so constituted that in their minds *all* these elements of philosophy, mysticism, emotion, and of work were equally present in full! That is the ideal, my ideal of a perfect man.'[31]

And the Swami expected that the education systems would be suitably designed to produce such wholesome human beings. Interestingly, the UNESCO report *Learning to Be* published in 1972, while defining the aim of education, echoed this same idea. It reads: 'The physical, the intellectual, emotional and ethical integration of the individual into a complete man is a broad definition of the fundamental aim of education.'[32]

The Education System and the Poor

So far we have discussed education primarily in the context of the society that already benefits from education. Vivekananda, however, was a genuine friend of the poor and the weak, particularly the helpless masses of India, and he was the first Indian leader who sought a solution to their problems through education. He argued that a nation was advanced to the extent that education and culture reached the masses. Unless there was uniform circulation of national blood all over the body, the nation could not rise. He insisted

that it was the duty of the upper classes, who had received their education at the expense of the poor, to come forward and uplift the poor through education and other means. In fact, the Swami's mission was for the poor. He once said, 'There must be equal chance for all—or if greater for some and for some less—the weaker should be given more chance than the strong.'[33]

The trend in recent years has been to shift the responsibility for education from the family, religious institutions, private charities and so forth, to public authorities, particularly the State. Yet, in spite of this shift to the State, education has hardly reached the most underprivileged. As they are often victims of malnutrition, poor hygienic conditions and overcrowded housing, they can hardly take advantage of any half-hearted opportunity that is offered.

Vivekananda felt that alienation of any kind from the masses of society, who are mostly poor—whether it be alienation through learning, through wealth or through force of arms—weakens the leadership of a county. Therefore, for a sustainable regeneration of India, if not for anything else, top priority must be given to educating the masses and restoring to them their lost individuality. They should not only be given education to make them self-reliant, but also ideas, moral training and an understanding of their own historical situation so that they can work out their own salvation. Furthermore, they must be given culture, without which there can be no hope for their long-term progress.

The Swami was particularly worried about the degradation of women in India. He was emphatic that women must be educated, for he believed that it is the women who mould the next generation, and hence, the destiny of the country. In Vivekananda's educational scheme for India, the uplift of women and the masses received the highest priority,

and his ideas approximated to Paulo Freire's concept of 'Conscientization.'[34]

Conclusion

There have been many changes in the field of education since Swami Vivekananda passed away more than one hundred years ago, but not as many changes as in other areas of society. One such noticeable change in education is that it is now engaged in preparing human beings for a new type of society, and it is trying to create a new type of human being for it. Interestingly, Swami Vivekananda had envisioned a society with a new type of human being in whom knowledge, action, work, and concentration were harmoniously blended, and he proposed a new type of education for achieving this.

The right to education for everyone, guaranteed by the Constitution of India, was Vivekananda's dream, but it is still a far cry from its goal. His idea of continual or lifelong education, however, has been adopted in many countries already. Moreover, because of the adoption of continuous education in these countries, our idea of what constitutes success and failure has altered, raising new hope for the weak, underprivileged section of these societies—the very people who for various reasons cannot complete their education when they are young. Vivekananda's cry for the uplift of the downtrodden masses, particularly of the long-neglected women, has evoked a favourable response from different quarters, but societies tailor education to meet their own needs, thereby often robbing the weak of their freedom to determine their own destiny. Unless radical changes are made in all societies the poor will never be able to raise themselves. This was a major concern of the Swami.

There is a remarkable similarity between Vivekananda's thoughts and actions a century ago and the present concerns of UNESCO.

- His commitment towards universal values and tolerance, his active identification with humanity as a whole.
- The struggle in favour of the poor and destitute, to reduce poverty and to eliminate discrimination against women—reaching the unreached.
- His vision of education, science and culture as the essential instruments of human development.
- The idea that education should be a lifelong process.
- And the need to move away from rote learning.

Himself a visionary and an original thinker, Vivekananda pointed out in his first public lecture in Asia, on 15 January 1897: 'But education has yet to be in the world, and civilization—civilization has begun nowhere yet.'[35] This is true. If we consider civilization to be the manifestation of the divine in human beings, as Vivekananda conceived it to be, no society has made much progress so far. This is why we find that mildness, gentleness, forbearance, tolerance, sympathy and so forth—the signs of a healthy civilization—have not taken root in any society on an appreciable scale, although we prematurely boast of a global village. The lack of basic necessities among the underprivileged all over the world is no less striking than the lack of morality among the educated privileged ones. To squarely meet this great challenge, Vivekananda prescribed 'man-making and character-building education.'[36] For this reason, if not for anything else, Vivekananda's thoughts on education ought to be seriously re-examined today.

References and Notes

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2. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai [*hereafter*, Gospel] p. 35.

3. CW. 6.255.
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5. *Datta*, B. 1993. *Swami Vivekananda, Patriot-Prophet—A Study*. Kolkata: Nababharat Publishers. pp. 88, 286.
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7. *Bhagavad Gita,* 5.25.
8. CW. 5.29.
9. Speech by Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO, on the occasion of the Exhibition and Seminar in Commemoration of the Centenary of Swami Vivekananda's appearance at the Parliament of Religions, Chicago, 1893, given at UNESCO Headquarters, 8 October 1993.
10. Vivekananda inspired Sir Jamshedji Tata to set up this educational scheme when they had travelled together from Yokohama to Chicago on the Swami's first visit to the West, in 1893.
11. Romain Rolland, *The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel*, trans. E. F. Malcolm-Smith (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 1992), p. 166.
12. CW. 4.358.
13. CW. 1.28.
14. CW. 7.21.
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16. CW. 3.302.
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18. CW. 4.490.
19. CW. 3.291.
20. G. H. Bantock, *T. S. Eliot and Education*. London: Faber & Faber, 1970, p.86.
21. *Srimad Bhāgavatam*, 3.29.27.
22. CW. 4.183.

23. CW. 1.28.
24. Gospel, 851.
25. CW. 2.15.
26. CW. 1.414.
27. CW. 3.182; 5.231.
28. CW. 2.137.
29. CW. 7.20.
30. CW. 2.14.
31. CW. 2.388.
32. Edgar Faure et al., *Learning to Be,* Paris: UNESCO, 1972, p. 156.
33. *Letters of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 255.
34. Paulo Freire (1921-1997) of Brazil, one of the best known educators of our time, developed a teaching system based on an educational process that focuses on the learner's environment. According to Freire, the learner must be aware of the historical situation in which he is situated, and he must understand how the knowledge he acquires relates to himself and to the society he lives in. Freire laid emphasis on building critical awareness to enable a person to read and write not words, but true reality—i.e. to understand true reality. Critical awareness building does not stop at reflection but includes action on that reflection. Vivekananda also believed that a person is the maker of his own destiny and proper education can help him achieve this.
35. CW. 3.114.
36. In this connection we can cite the views of some historians. Will and Ariel Durant, in their *The Lessons of History*, said, 'Evolution in men during recorded time has been social rather than biological: it has proceeded not by heritable variations in the species, but mostly by economic, political, intellectual and moral innovation transmitted to individuals and generations by imitation, custom or education' (Will Durant and Ariel Durant, *The Lessons of History*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1968, p. 34).

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON EDUCATION

We are all aware of the inadequacy of the present-day system of education. Educationists—Eastern and Western—are engaged for decades, in devising better methods of imparting knowledge and improving the morale of the student community. Despite their best efforts, we are, unfortunately, left in the same deplorable condition as we were before, and much worse, as is generally felt, there is a growing degeneration.

The reasons for the inadequacy and degeneration are quite obvious, but our savants of education are, for matters of policy and principle, not able to tackle the problems in their entirety.

Education in Ancient India

It is universally recognized that we had, in ancient India, a unique system of education, which attracted students from all over the then known world. But unable to appreciate the wealth of Indian culture, the foreign educationists considered it useless and even unhealthy, and so tried to replace it by their own. But we would forget it to our detriment that the architects of the glorious culture of this great land were saints and seers. It is to them that we have to turn for light and guidance in the apparently difficult endeavour of re-orientating the system of education in India.

It is singularly fortunate that one such saint-seer of India, Swami Vivekananda, has bestowed his thoughts on this dif-

ficult problem and has offered practical solutions, which, if zealously applied, will facilitate establishing a system that will be a harmonious blending of the culture of this land with the scientific methods of the West.

Even in the midst of his cyclonic activities the Swami clearly saw the defects of modern education which is a bundle of negations. He observed:

> The education that you are getting now has some good points, but it has a tremendous disadvantage which is so great that the good things are all weighed down. In the first place it is not a man-making education, it is merely and entirely a negative education. A negative education, or any training that is based on negation, is worse than death.[1]

But his was not a destructive criticism. He fully visualized the healthy system that is bound to replace the present one if India has to survive at all. So he said: 'We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas.'[2]

This, in fact, is the *summum bonum* of education, an education which should aim at the development of the entire personality of man. The Swami has completely comprehended all the aspects of education, not neglecting its main purpose of imparting knowledge. So he has clarified: 'If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library.'[3]

True Aim of Education

The object of the ideal system of education, then, should not merely be the advancement of theoretical knowledge but also the advancement of life, development of the highest powers and capacities, and the unfoldment of the noblest

potentialities of the student. He must be enabled at the same time to apply intelligently to his own life all the ideas that he has learnt and gathered and thus promote his growth—physically, intellectually, morally, and spiritually.

Swami Vivekananda has tackled the problem in its entirety. Unlike those who try to paint and decorate a hopelessly dilapidated building in their vain efforts to make it new, this grand architect has suggested that a glorious mansion should be built on a firmer foundation. That is why he observes:

> Every improvement in India requires first of all an upheaval in religion. Before flooding the land with socialistic or political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas. If you attempt to get secular knowledge without religion, I tell you plainly, vain is your attempt in India; it will never have a hold on the people.[4]

The Role of Religion

The question arises as to why religion should be associated with education at all. The answer is obvious and more so in India.

The ordinary means of imparting education is to 'drive into the mind' of the student a mass of information for which he may possess no real interest. The child is ordinarily considered more or less a receiving machine. But according to the literal meaning of the term education, he is to be treated in an altogether different manner. He is to be regarded as a living entity with innate capacities and potentialities, which are to be drawn out.

'Whatever a man knows,' observes Swami Vivekananda, 'should, in strict psychological language, be what he discovers or unveils. What a man "learns" is really what he discovers by taking the cover off his soul.'[5]

In order to formulate any true system of education, we must first of all consider the nature of those whom we want to educate. Here a very important question arises: Are our children mere bodies—a mere, combination of cells—and their mind, an 'epiphenomenon'—a by-product of the highly organized brain cells—or, are they integrated body-minds? Or, are they spiritual entities, which move and dominate minds and bodies?

It is evident that a human being is not a mass of cells. He is a soul. We need not discuss here the superiority or otherwise of the different theories as to the true nature of human personality. But it is impossible to formulate any system of education without having a definite conception of the nature, the inner potentialities of the being we want to educate and train.

'Each soul', Swami Vivekananda declares, 'is potentially divine, and the goal is to manifest this divine within.'[6] He defines religion as 'the manifestation of the divinity already in man'.[7] This self-realization is possible only through education which is 'the manifestation of perfection already in man'.[8] The attainment of perfection brings out the divine nature. The goal of human existence is to manifest the perfection and divinity of the soul by removing the accretions and encrustations which have grown round what is taken to be the personality.

Growth of the Personality

But, with reference to the education of the child, we are not concerned with this ultimate nature and goal. We are now interested mainly in the child as a human being, and in the course he is to follow for the evolution and growth of his personality. It is enough for our present purpose if we regard the student under our care as a self-conscious entity, dwelling in the physical body, having organs of sense-perception and possessing the 'inner-organ' called the mind, with

its faculties of intellect, feeling and will. These faculties are capable of being developed to the maximum tune of perfection. Associated with the mind, the self-conscious entity or spirit becomes a psychological being. Connected with the physical body, the psychological being becomes an embodied being—a human personality. Thus true education means an all-round culture—physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual. A complete system of education cannot disregard any of these different aspects. It must take into account the development of a healthy body, a proper control of sense-impulses and instincts, the acquirement of knowledge, sublimation and proper direction of feeling and sentiment, development of the will and the sense of duty. It must have the rightful place for soul-culture which removes mental darkness and revives the glory of the pure self by enabling one to rise above the false personality founded on identification with the unreal and nourished by false desires and morbid gratification of the senses. The physical body is to be sustained by proper material food, the mind to be developed through the assimilation of the right type of ideas, and the soul, to be nourished by earnest prayer and meditation.

A complete system of education, as has been stated, implies a balance and harmony between the properly developed body, mind, and soul. Physical culture is comparatively simple and easy, while the culture of the mind is a more difficult affair as it has got its sub-conscious and conscious, its intuitive and intelligent processes with regard to the working of different faculties. The most difficult of all is the culture of the soul, which implies the awakening of the intuitive faculty or the soul's appreciation of itself and direct experience of the true Self, without passing through the complex, tortuous, and insufficient mental process. But, whatever it be, it will not do for us to evade a question which stares us in the face. In

our attempt at formulating the right type of education, we have to regard life as an indivisible whole, and as such we have to include in our system of education both intellectual knowledge and spiritual realization.

Religion Ought to be the Basis

When the Swami perceived that religion should be the firm foundation on which the great edifice of education was to be built, he had in mind no particular religion, but a universal religion. So he said: 'I look upon religion as the innermost core of education. Mind, I do not mean my own or anybody else's opinion about religion. The true eternal principles have to be held before people.'[9]

In imparting religious education to the student, stress is to be laid on the essentials of one's faith, viz. the nature of the soul, its relation to the supreme Spirit and its attitude towards other souls. This is the basic common factor connecting all religions. It is to be distinguished from rituals and ceremonials which differ widely but help the student to realize the eternal relationship between his eternal soul and eternal God.

It is needless to say that only a pure and alert mind has the acumen to grasp instantaneously the instructions—secular and spiritual. The ancient Hindus with their incomparable knowledge of practical psychology laid proper stress on the prerequisites of an ideal studenthood. They had, of course, spiritual realization as the highest goal of life and made all secular knowledge subservient to it. But the path they prescribed for the attainment of knowledge holds equally good for receiving both the types, namely, secular and spiritual.

The Need for Brahmacharya

They held that the highest goal of life could be attained usually by passing through the various stages of life, one after

another. Let us focus our attention on the first of them which is very pertinent with the issue with which we are dealing now. It is *brahmacharya*, the period of sense-control including practice of continence, mental discipline, and study. A *brahmachāri*, if he wants to take the vow of lifelong celibacy and finds himself fit for it, may remain as a *brahmachāri* without entering the family life at all. Or, he may take to the life of a hermit or that of a monk. But normally the youth, after he finds himself properly equipped for the struggles of life with its manifold distractions and temptations, should enter the stage of the householder. According to the Hindu ideal, marriage is a sacrament and the household is an *āshrama*—a place not for sense-gratification but for the performance of duties, worship, and service.

During the period of studentship, the foundation of life is to be laid properly. If it fails, later life is also bound to be a failure. That is the reason why great stress is laid on the life of *brahmacharya*. It was so in ancient times and it should be so in the present time also.

Speaking of the application of the ancient ideal of the student life to our present-day education, Swami Vivekananda observes: 'The old institution of living with the guru and such systems of imparting education are needed. What we want are Western science coupled with Vedanta, *brahmacharya* as guiding motto, and *śraddhā* and also faith in oneself.'[10]

The *Bhāgavatam* enumerates the duties of the *brahmachāri*:

> The student must practice self-control and study the scriptures, along with other branches of learning. He should observe strict continence, never consciously departing from it. He must learn to offer his heart's worship to the Divine Self in all beings and to see the One God residing in all.[11]

Speaking of the power of continence, Sri Ramakrishna declares:

> If a man practices absolute *brahmacharya* for twelve years, the *medhā nādi* (nerve of intelligence) will open, i.e. ... his power of understanding will blossom. His understanding will become capable of penetrating and comprehending the subtlest ideas. With such an understanding man can realize God. God can be attained only through a purified understanding of this type.[12]

Chastity in thought, word, and deed, always and in all conditions, constitutes what is called *brahmacharya*. In it the energy that expresses itself as sexual energy, is transformed into spiritual energy. As Swami Vivekananda observes:

> The human energy which is expressed as sex-energy, in sexual thought, when checked and controlled, easily becomes changed into *ojas*. It is only the chaste man and woman who can make *ojas*, and store it in the brain; that is why chastity has always been considered the highest virtue. ...
>
> By the observance of strict *brahmacharya* all learning can be mastered in a very short time; one acquires unfailing memory of what one hears or knows but once. The chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will-power.[13]

Modern Medical Men Support the Indian Ideal

This view is fully supported by the considered opinion of some eminent Western medical men. Observes one of them:

> It is a medical—a physiological—fact that the best blood in the body goes to form the elements of reproduction in both sexes. In a pure and orderly life, this matter is absorbed. It goes back into circulation, ready to form the finest brain,

> nerve, and muscular tissue. This life of man, carried back and diffused through his system, makes him manly, strong, brave, and heroic. If wasted it leaves him effeminate, weak, and irresolute, intellectually and physically debilitated, and prey to sexual irritation, disordered function, morbid sensation, disordered muscular movement, a wretched nervous system, epilepsy, insanity, and death. The suspended use of the generative organs is attended with a notable increase of bodily vigour and spiritual life.[14]

In the words of many members of the medical profession of New York and its vicinity: 'Chastity, a pure continent life, is consonant with the best conditions of physical, mental, and moral health.'

Dr. Alexis Carrell, in his work, *Man the Unknown,* observes:

> It is well known that sexual excesses impede intellectual activity. In order to reach its full power, intelligence seems to require both the presence of well-developed sexual glands and the temporary repression of the sexual appetite. Freud has rightly emphasized the capital importance of sexual impulses in the activities of consciousness. However his observations refer chiefly to sick people. His conclusions should not be generalized to include normal individuals, especially those who are endowed with a strong nervous system and a mastery over themselves. While the weak, the nervous, and the unbalanced become more abnormal when their sexual appetites are repressed, the strong are rendered still stronger by practising such a form of asceticism.[15]

To quote the words of two other authorities: 'For a young man up to the time of his marriage, chastity is most salutary,

not only in an ethical and aesthetical sense, but also from hygienic standpoint.'

Mahatma Gandhi's Views on Brahmacharya

The goal of *brahmacharya* is to dwell in *Brahman* or attain spiritual realization. The means to attain it is an all-round sense-control and manifestation of the gathered energy along the line of spiritual striving and loving service, both of which lead the *brahmachāri* towards the highest illumination. In our modern world, Mahatma Gandhi advocated the practice of *brahmacharya* for the good of the individual and the family and society. He represents the ancient spirit of *brahmacharya* when he observes:

> Mere control of animal passion has been thought to be tantamount to observing *brahmacharya*. I feel that this conception is incomplete and wrong. *Brahmacharya* means control of all the organs of sense. He who attempts to control only one organ, and allows all the others free play, is bound to find his effort futile. To hear suggestive stories with the ears, to see suggestive sights with the eyes, to taste stimulating food with the tongue, to touch exciting things with the hands, and then at the same time to expect to control the only remaining organ is like putting one's hands in the fire, and expecting to escape being burnt. ... If we practice simultaneous self-control in all directions, the attempt will be scientific and possible of success.[16]

With a deep insight gained through his own striving and personal experience, he observes:

> Mind is at the root of all sensuality. ... Many aspirants after *brahmacharya* fail because in the use of their other sense-organs they want to carry on like those who are not

> *brahmachāris*. Their effort is, therefore, identical with the effort to experience the bracing cold of winter in the scorching summer months.

Brahmacharya means control of the senses in thought, word and deed. ... So long as thought is not under complete control of the will *brahmacharya* in its fullness is absent. ... Curbing the mind is even more difficult than curbing the wind. Nevertheless the existence of God within makes even control of the mind possible.[17]

'Every boy,' declares Swami Vivekananda, 'should be trained to practice absolute *brahmacharya* and then *śraddhā*, faith, will come.'[18]

Cultivation of Śraddhā *or Faith in Oneself*

The word *śraddhā* means faith in oneself, faith in Divine existence and grace, faith in the scriptures revealed to the sages, faith in one's potentialities and capacity for self-realization. In his inimitable way the Swami gives a new definition of the word *śraddhā*:

> The old religion said that he was an atheist who did not believe in God. The new religion says that he is an atheist who does not believe in himself. But it is not selfish faith. It means faith in all, because you are all. Love for yourself means love for all, for you are all. It is the greatest faith which will make the world better.[19]

As already pointed out, the Swami's ideal of education is based on the realization that man, in his essential nature, is Atman—pure Spirit. The body of ours is a *Devālaya*, the abode of the Divine Being. Just as the soul animates the body, God dwells as the Soul of all souls. It is the *Brahma Mandira*, the temple of *Brahman*, the supreme Spirit.

The indomitable energy of the youth is to be manifested not only in his studies and in attempts at self-mastery, but also in loving service to his fellow-beings. The education of a young man is never complete without his developing this sense of service.

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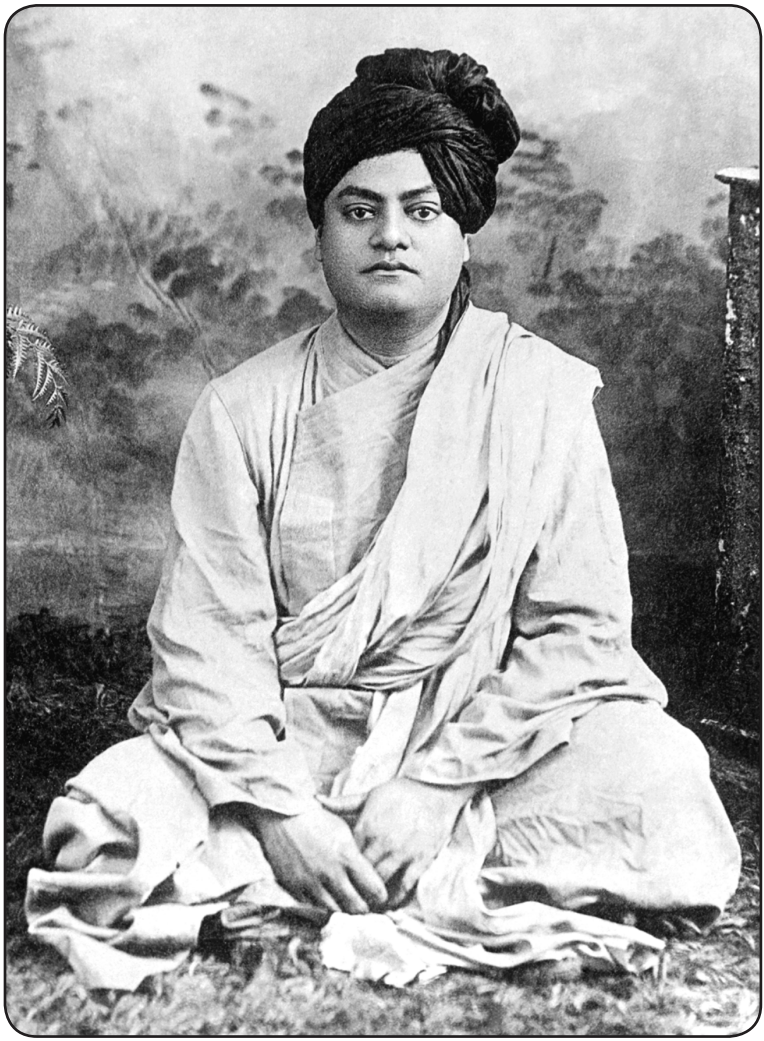
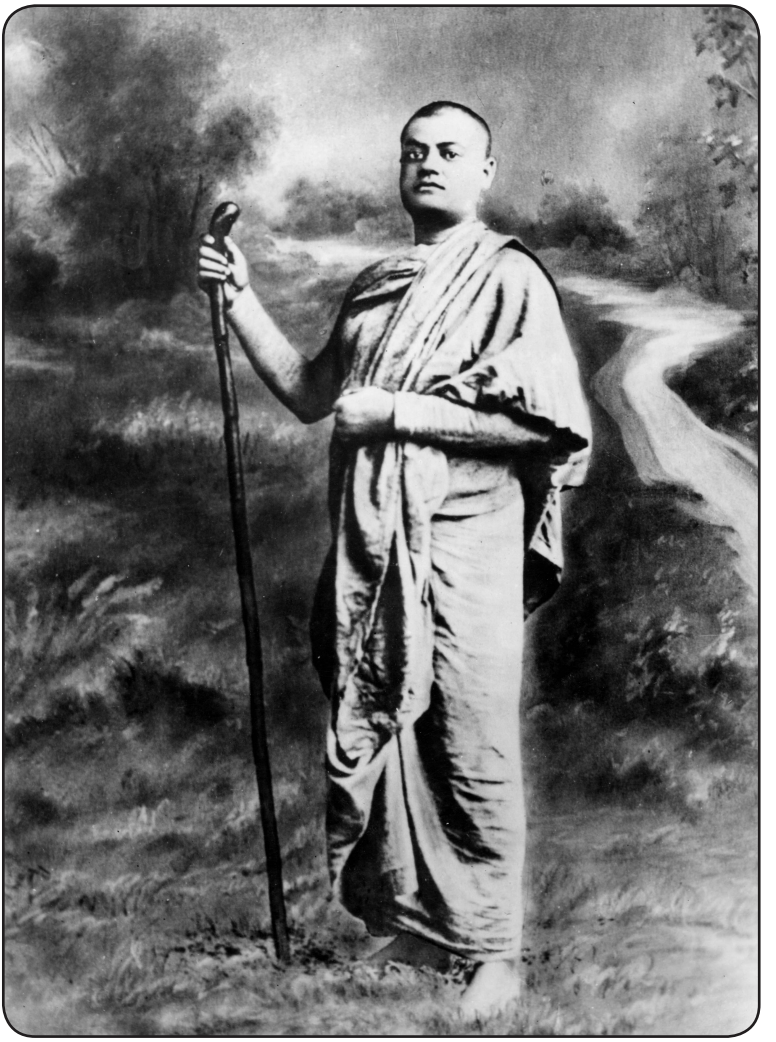
3. Ibid., p.302.
4. Ibid., p.302.
5. CW. 1.28. (10th edn)
6. Ibid., p.124.
7. CW. 4.358. (7th edn)
8. Ibid.
9. CW. 5.231. (7th edn)
10. Ibid., p.366.
11. *Srimad Bhāgavatam*, trans. Swami Prabhavananda, 1st edn., p.176.
12. *Sayings of Sri Ramakrishna*, 8th edn., p.170.
13. CW. 1.170. (10th edn)
14. Dr. Nicholls, *Esoteric Anthropology* quoted in *Bhakti-Yoga* by Ashwini Kumar Datta, p.62.
15. *Man the Unknown*, 8th edn., p.140.
16. From *Yervada Mandira*, 3rd edn., pp.13-14.
17. *My Experiments with Truth*, 4th edn., pp.258-59.
18. CW. 5.369. (7th edn)
19. CW. 2.301. (9th edn)



Swami Vivekananda in Colombo, January, 1897



Swami Vivekananda as a Wandering Monk, Jaipur, 1891

Swami Vivekananda at Oakland, February, 1900

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man. (CW. 4.358)

Knowledge is inherent in man. No knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside. What we say a man 'knows', should, in strict psychological language, be what he 'discovers' or 'unveils'; what a man 'learns' is really what he 'discovers', by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge.

We say Newton discovered gravitation. Was it sitting anywhere in a corner waiting for him? It was in his own mind; the time came and he found it out. ... The falling of an apple gave the suggestion to Newton, and he studied his own mind. He rearranged all the previous links of thought in his mind and discovered a new link among them, which we call the law of gravitation. It was not in the apple, nor in anything in the centre of the earth.

All knowledge, therefore, secular or spiritual, is in the human mind. In many cases it is not discovered, but remains covered, and when the covering is being slowly taken off, we say, 'We are learning.' (CW. 1.28)

What is education? Is it book-learning? No. Is it diverse knowledge? Not even that. The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become

fruitful is called education. Now consider, is that education as a result of which the will, being continuously choked by force through generations, is well-nigh killed out; is that education under whose sway even the old ideas, let alone the new ones, are disappearing one by one; is that education which is slowly making man a machine? (CW. 4.490)

Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library. ... If education is identical with information, the libraries are the greatest sages in the world, and encyclopaedias are the *rishis*.
(CW. 3.302)

Negative thoughts weaken men. Do you not find that where parents are constantly taxing their sons to read and write, telling them they will never learn anything, and calling them fools and so forth, the latter do actually turn out to be so in many cases? If you speak kind words to boys and encourage them, they are bound to improve in time. What holds good of children, also holds good of children in the region of higher thoughts. If you can give them positive ideas, people will grow up to be men and learn to stand on their own legs.
(CW. 7.170)

In language and literature, in poetry and the arts, in everything we must point out not the mistakes that people are making in their thoughts and actions, but the way in which they will gradually be able to do these things better. Pointing out mistakes, wounds a man's feelings. (CW. 7.170)

You cannot teach a child anymore than you can grow a plant. All you can do is on the negative side—you can only help. It is a manifestation from within; it develops its own nature—you can only take away obstructions. (CW. 5.410)

The education that you are getting now has some good points, but it has a tremendous disadvantage which is so great that the good things are all weighed down. In the first place it is not a man-making education, it is merely and entirely a negative education. A negative education or any training that is based on negation is worse than death. (CW. 3.301)

We must have a hold on the spiritual and secular education of the nation. ... You must dream it, you must talk it, you must think it, and you must work it out. Till then there is no salvation for the race. (CW. 3.301)

We must have the whole education of our country, spiritual and secular, in our own hands, and it must be on national lines, through national methods as far as practical. Of course this is a very big scheme, a very big plan. I do not know whether it will ever work out. But we must begin the work. (CW. 3.302)

What is civilization? It is the feeling of the divine within. (CW. 8.228)

Education has yet to be in the world, and civilization—civilization has begun nowhere yet. (CW. 3.114)

The present system of education is all wrong. The mind is crammed with facts before it knows how to think. (CW. 8.280)

Those of you who have read Herbert Spencer remember what he calls the 'monastery system' of education that was tried in Europe and which in some parts proved a success; that is, there is one schoolmaster, whom the village keeps. These primary schools are very rudimentary, because our methods are so simple. Each boy brings a little mat; and his paper, to begin with, is palm leaves. Palm leaves first, paper is too costly. Each boy spreads his little mat and sits upon it, brings out his inkstand and his books and begins to write. A little arithmetic, some Sanskrit grammar, a little of language and accounts—these are taught in the primary school.

(CW. 8.68)

The man at whose feet I sat all my life—and it is only a few ideas of his that I try to teach—could [hardly] write his name at all. All my life I have not seen another man like that, and I have travelled all over the world. When I think of that man, I feel like a fool, because I want to read books and he never did. He never wanted to lick the plates after other people had eaten. That is why he was his own book. All my life I am repeating what Jack said and John said, and never say anything myself. (CW. 6.64)

Books are infinite in number and time is short; therefore the secret of knowledge is to take what is essential. Take that and try to live up to it. (CW. 1.236)

It is one of the evils of your Western civilization that you are after intellectual education alone, and take no care of the heart. It only makes men ten times more selfish, and that will be your destruction. (CW. 1.412)

I would a hundred times rather have a little heart and no brain, than be all brains and no heart, ... he who has no heart and only brains dies of dryness. (CW. 2.145)

Bring light to the ignorant, and more light to the educated, for the vanities of the education of our time are tremendous! (CW. 3.247)

First of all comes the gift of food; next is the gift of learning, and the highest of all is the gift of knowledge. (CW. 7.159)

There is only one purpose in the whole of life—education. Otherwise what is the use of men and women, land and wealth? (CW. 8.431)

There are [more than] a hundred books comprising the Upanishads, some very small and some big, each a separate treatise. The Upanishads do not reveal the life of any teacher, but simply teach principles. They are [as it were] shorthand notes taken down of discussion in [learned assemblies], generally in the courts of kings. The word Upanishad may mean "sittings" [or "sitting near a teacher"]. (CW. 1.446)

Each nation is a type, physically and mentally. Each is constantly receiving ideas from others only to work them out into its type, that is, along the national line. The time has not come for the destruction of types. All education from any source is compatible with the ideals in every country; only they must be nationalized, i.e. fall in line with the rest of the type ... . (CW. 8.523-24)

SOCIETY AND EDUCATION

Well, you consider a man as educated if only he can pass some examinations and deliver good lectures. The education which does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy and the courage of a lion—is it worth the name? Real education is that which enables one to stand on one's own legs. The education that you are receiving now in schools and colleges is only making you a race of dyspeptics. You are working like machines merely, and living a jelly-fish existence. (CW. 7.147-8)

Getting by heart the thoughts of others in a foreign language, and stuffing your brain with them and taking some university degrees, you consider yourself educated! Fie upon you! Is this education? What is the goal of your education? Either a clerkship, or being a roguish lawyer, or at the most a Deputy Magistracy, which is another form of clerkship—isn't that all? What good will it do you or the country at large? Open your eyes and see what a piteous cry for food is rising in the land of Bharata, proverbial for its wealth! Will your education fulfill this want? Never. (CW. 7.182)

We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet. (CW. 5.342)

The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful, is called education. (CW. 4.490)

It is man-making education all round that we want. (CW. 3.224)

Education, education, education alone! Travelling through many cities of Europe and observing in them the comforts and education of even the poor people, there was brought to my mind the state of our own poor people, and I used to shed tears. What made the difference? Education was the answer I got. (CW. 4.483)

On one side, new India is saying, 'If we only adopt Western ideas, Western language, Western food, Western dress, and Western manners, we shall be as strong and powerful as the Western nations'; on the other, old India is saying, 'Fools! By imitation, others' ideas never become one's own; nothing, unless earned, is your own. Does the ass in the lion's skin become the lion?'

On one side, new India is saying, 'What the Western nations do is surely good, otherwise how did they become so great?' On the other side, old India is saying, 'The flash of lightning is intensely bright, but only for a moment; look out, boys, it is dazzling your eyes. Beware!' (CW. 4.477)

We have had a negative education all along from our boyhood. We have only learnt that we are nobodies. Seldom are we given to understand that great men were ever born in our country. Nothing positive has been taught to us. We do not even know how to use our hands and feet! ... We have learnt only weakness. (CW. 5.332)

The first duty is to educate the people. (CW. 3.216)

If you are to live at all, you must adjust yourself to the times. If we are to live at all, we must be a scientific nation. (CW. 6.113)

Our part of the duty lies in imparting true education to all men and women in society. As an outcome of that education, they will of themselves be able to know what is good for them and what is bad, and will spontaneously eschew the latter. It will not be then necessary to pull down or set up anything in society by coercion. (CW. 6.493)

As to education and culture, it all depends upon the man. That is to say, where the men are highly cultured, there the women are; where the men are not, women are not. (CW. 8.68)

Education for both boys and girls is neglected, entirely neglected. There are a great many things that should be done in that land (India). (CW. 8.70)

The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education, to develop their lost individuality. That is the great task between our people and princes. Up to now nothing has been done in that direction. (CW. 4.362)

The only way to bring about the levelling of caste is to appropriate the culture, the education, which is the strength of the higher castes. That done, you have what you want. (CW. 3.291)

All the members of a society ought to have the same opportunity for obtaining wealth, education, or knowledge.

(CW. 5.146)

Now, from the oldest times, you know, the primary education, according to the old Hindu customs, belongs to the village system. All the land from time immemorial was nationalized ... belonged to the Government. There never is any private right in land. The revenue in India comes from the land, because every man holds so much land from the Government. This land is held in common by a community, it may be five, ten, twenty, or a hundred families. They govern the whole of the land, pay a certain amount of revenue to the Government, maintain a physician, a village schoolmaster, and so on.

(CW. 8.68)

The whole difference between the West and the East is in this: They are nations, we are not, i.e., civilization, education here is general, it penetrates into the masses. The higher classes in India and America are the same, but the distance is infinite between the lower classes of the two countries.

(CW. 8.306)

From the day when education and culture etc began to spread gradually from patricians to plebeians, grew the distinction between the modern civilization as of Western countries, and the ancient civilization as of India, Egypt, Rome, etc.

(CW. 4.482)

Set yourselves to the task of spreading education among the masses. ... Kindle their knowledge with the help of modern science. Teach them history, geography, science, literature, and along with these the profound truths of religion. In

exchange for that teaching, the poverty of the teachers will also disappear. By mutual exchange both parties will become friendly to each other. (CW. 7.149)

Educate our people, so that they may be able to solve their own problems. Until that is done, all these ideal reforms will remain ideals only. (CW. 5.215)

If ever I get money in my possession, I shall first spend that in the service of man. Man is first to be saved; he must be given food, education, and spirituality. (CW. 6.451)

Yonder plot of land on the south side of the Math will be the center of learning, where grammar, philosophy, science, literature, rhetoric, the *Śrutis*, *Bhakti* scriptures, and English will be taught. ... Teaching will be imparted here irrespective of caste or creed, and those who will have objection to this will not be admitted. (CW. 7.158)

The ideal of all education, all training, should be this man-making. But, instead of that, we are always trying to polish up the outside. What use in polishing up the outside when there is no inside? The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The man who influences, who throws his magic, as it were, upon his fellow-beings, is a dynamo of power, and when that man is ready, he can do anything and everything he likes; that personality put upon anything will make it work. (CW. 2.15)

Why does not the nation move? First educate the nation, create your legislative body, and then the law will be forthcoming. First create the power, the sanction from which the law will spring. The kings are gone; where is the new sanction, the new

power of the people? Bring it up. Therefore, even for social reform, the first duty is to educate the people, and you will have to wait till that time comes. (CW. 3.216)

Most of the monks are educated. Those that are not are also having secular education. But above all, to do good, perfect unselfishness is absolutely necessary. (CW. 8.424)

We get mostly those who have already educated themselves. What is needed is training them into our method and building up of character. The training is to make them obedient and fearless; and the method is to help the poor physically first and then work up to higher regions of mentality.
(CW. 8.425)

Are not drums made in the country? Are not trumpets and kettle-drums available in India? Make the boys hear the deep-toned sound of these instruments. Hearing from boyhood the sound of these effeminate forms of music and the listening to the *kirtana*, the country is well-nigh converted into a country of women. ... The *damaru* and horn have to be sounded; drums are to be beaten so as to raise the deep and martial notes.
(CW. 7.232-3)

It is one of the evils of your Western civilization that you are after intellectual education alone, and take no care of the heart. It only makes men ten times more selfish. ... When there is conflict between the heart and the brain, let the heart be followed. ... It is the heart which takes one to the highest plane, which intellect can never reach; it goes beyond intellect, and reaches to what is called inspiration. (CW. 1.412-3)

Always cultivate the heart. (CW. 1.415)

From the highest God to the meanest grass, the same power is present in all—whether manifested or not. We shall have to call forth that power by going from door to door.

... Along with this, education has to be imparted. That is easy to say, but how to reduce it into practice? There are thousands of unselfish, kind-hearted men in our country who have renounced everything. In the same way as they travel about and give religious instructions without any remuneration, so at least half of them can be trained as teachers or bearers of such education as we need most. For that, we want first of all a centre in the capital of each Presidency, from whence to spread slowly throughout the whole of India. Two centres have recently been started in Madras and Kolkata; there is hope of more soon. Then, the greater part of the education to the poor should be given orally, time is not yet ripe for schools. Gradually in these main centres will be taught agriculture, industry, etc., and workshops will be established for the furtherance of arts. To sell the manufactures of those workshops in Europe and America, associations will be started like those already in existence. It will be necessary to start centres for women, exactly like those for men. (CW. 4.484-5)

In our books there is the doctrine of universal equality, but in work we make great distinctions. It was in India that unselfish and disinterested work of the most exalted type was preached; but in practice we are awfully cruel, awfully heartless—unable to think of anything besides our own mass-of-flesh bodies. (CW. 5.127)

About the psychical things that have been the subject of discussion, I have very little to say here, for in the first place, the question is whether psychical subjects are capable of scientific demonstration. What do you mean by this demonstration?

First of all, there will be the subjective and the objective side necessary. Taking chemistry and physics, with which we are so familiar, and of which we have read so much, is it true that everyone in this world is able to understand the demonstration even of the commonest subjects? Take any boor and show him one of your experiments. What will he understand of it? Nothing. It requires a good deal of previous training to be brought up to the point of understanding an experiment. Before that he cannot understand it at all. That is a great difficulty in the way. If scientific demonstration means bringing down certain facts to a plane which is universal for all human beings, where all beings can understand it, I deny that there can be any such scientific demonstration for any subject in the world. If it were so, all our universities and education would be in vain. Why are we educated if by birth we can understand everything scientific? Why so much study? It is of no use whatsoever. (CW. 4.192-3)

Our character has disappeared. Our English education has destroyed everything and left nothing in its place. Our children have lost their politeness. To talk nicely is degrading. To be reverential to one's elders is degrading. Irreverence has been the sign of liberty. It is high time that we go back to our old politeness. The reformers have nothing to give in place of what they have taken away. Yet in spite of the most adverse surrounding of climate, etc., we have been able to do much, we have to do much more. I am proud of my race, I do not despair, (and) I am seeing daily a glorious and wonderful future in my mental visions. Take greatest care of these young ones on whom our future depends. (CW. 9.546-7)

THE TRUE TEACHER

In regard to the teacher, we must see that he knows the spirit of the scriptures. The whole world reads Bibles, Vedas and Korans; but they are all only words, syntax, etymology, philology, the dry bones of religion. The teacher who deals too much in words and allows the mind to be carried away by the force of words loses the spirit. It is the knowledge of the spirit of the scriptures alone that constitutes the true religious teacher.
(CW. 3.48-9)

The second condition necessary in the teacher is—sinlessness. The question is often asked, 'Why should we look into the character and personality of a teacher?'... This is not right... The sine qua non of acquiring. ... truth for one's self or for imparting to others is the purity of heart and soul. ... He must be perfectly pure, and then alone comes the value of his words. (CW. 3.50)

The function of the teacher is indeed an affair of the transference of something, and not one of mere stimulation of the existing intellectual or other faculties in the taught. Something real and appreciable as an influence comes from the teacher and goes to the taught. Therefore the teacher must be pure.
(CW. 3.50-1)

The only true teacher is he who can convert himself, as it were, into a thousand persons at a moment's notice. The only true

teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the student, and transfer his soul to the student's soul and see through the student's eyes and hear through his ears and understand through his mind. Such a teacher can really teach and none else. All these negative, breaking-down, destructive teachers that are in the world can never do any good.
(CW. 4.183)

No one was ever really taught by another; each of us has to teach himself. The external teacher offers only the suggestion which rouses the internal teacher to work to understand things. (CW. 1.93)

My idea of education is personal contact with the teacher—*gurugriha-vāsa*. Without the personal life of a teacher there would be no education. (CW. 5.224)

THE TEACHER AND THE TAUGHT

One should live from his very boyhood with one whose character is like a blazing fire and should have before him a living example of the highest teaching. (CW. 5.369)

The old system of education in India... is very different from the modern system. The students had not to pay. It was thought that knowledge is so sacred that no man ought to sell it. Knowledge must be given freely and without any price. The teachers used to take students without charge, and not only so, most of them gave their students food and clothes. To support these teachers the wealthy families... made gifts to them... and they in their turn had to maintain their students.
(CW. 4.162-3)

There are certain conditions necessary in the taught, and also in the teacher. The conditions necessary in the taught are purity, a real thirst after knowledge, and perseverance.
(CW. 4.24)

Purity in thought, speech, and act is absolutely necessary. ... As to the thirst after knowledge, it is an old law that we all get whatever we want. None of us can get anything other than what we fix our hearts upon. ... There must be a continuous struggle, a constant fight, an unremitting grappling with our lower nature, till the higher want is actually felt and victory

is achieved. ... The student who sets out with such a spirit of perseverance will surely find success and realization at last. (CW. 3.48)

With the teacher, therefore, our relationship is the same as that between an ancestor and his descendant. Without faith, humility, submission, and veneration in our hearts towards our religious teacher, there cannot be any growth of religion in us. ... In those countries which have neglected to keep up this kind of relation the religious teacher has become a mere lecturer, the teacher expecting his five dollars and the person taught expecting his brain to be filled with the teacher's words, and each going his own way after this much has been done. (CW. 3.52)

The true teacher is one who can throw his whole force into the tendency of the taught. Without real sympathy we can never teach well. (CW. 7.99)

You see, no one can teach anybody. The teacher spoils everything by thinking that he is teaching. Thus Vedanta says that within man is all knowledge—even in a boy it is so—and it requires only an awakening, and that much is the work of a teacher. We have to do only so much for the boys that they may learn to apply their own intellect to the proper use of their hands, legs, ears, eyes, etc. and finally everything will become easy. (CW. 5.366)

The bond between the teacher and the taught ... is peculiar to India. The teacher is not a man, who comes just to teach me, and I pay him so much, and there it ends. In India it is really like an adoption. The teacher is more than my own father, and I am truly his child, his son in every respect. I owe him obedi-

ence and reverence first, before my own father even; because, they say, the father gave me this body, but he showed me the way to salvation, he is greater than father. And we carry this love, this respect for our teacher all our lives.

(CW. 8.78)

The disciple must have faith in the guru (teacher). In the West the teacher simply gives intellectual knowledge; that is all. The relationship with the teacher is the greatest in life. My dearest and nearest relative in life is my guru; next, my mother; then my father. My first reverence is to the guru.

(CW. 8.112)

He alone teaches who has something to give, for teaching is not talking, teaching is not imparting doctrines, it is communicating. (CW. 4.177-8)

Find the (spiritual) teacher, serve him as a child, open your heart to his influence, see in him God manifested.

(CW. 4.28)

There are still greater dangers in regard to the transmitter, the guru (spiritual teacher). There are many who, though immersed in ignorance, yet, in the pride of their hearts, fancy they know everything, and not only do not stop there, but offer to take others on their shoulders; and thus the blind leading the blind, both fall into the ditch. ... The world is full of these. Every one wants to be a teacher; every beggar wants to make a gift of a million dollars! Just as these beggars are ridiculous, so are these teachers. (CW. 3.47)

The old institution of 'living with the guru' and similar systems of imparting education are needed. What we want are

western science coupled with Vedanta, *brahmacharya* as the guiding motto, and also *śraddhā* and faith in one's own self. Another thing that we want is the abolition of that system which aims at educating our boys in the same manner as that of the man who battered his ass, being advised that it could thereby be turned into a horse. (CW. 5.366)

You cannot make a plant grow in soil unsuited to it. A child teaches itself. But you can help it to go forward in its own way. What you can do is not of the positive nature, but of the negative. You can take away the obstacles, but knowledge comes out of its own nature. Loosen the soil a little, so that it may come out easily. Put a hedge round it; see that it is not killed by anything, and there your work stops. You cannot do anything else. The rest is a manifestation from within its own nature. So with the education of a child; a child educates itself. (CW. 4.55)

All teaching implies giving and taking, the teacher gives and the taught receives, but the one must have something to give, and the other must be open to receive. (CW. 4.178)

The teaching must therefore be modified according to the needs of the taught. ... Fire a mass of bird-shot, one at least will strike; give a man a whole museum of truths, he will at once take what is suited to him. Past lives have moulded our tendencies; give to the taught in accordance with his tendency. Intellectual, mystical, devotional, practical—make one the basis, but teach the others with it. (CW. 7.98)

EDUCATION OF THE MASSES

The great national sin is the neglect of the masses, and that is one of the causes of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed, and well cared for. (CW. 5.222-3)

A nation is advanced in proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses. The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolizing of the whole education and intelligence of the land... among a handful of men. If we are to rise again, we shall have to do it... by spreading education among the masses. (CW. 4.482)

The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education, to develop their lost individuality. ... They are to be given ideas; their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them; and then they will work out their own salvation. Every nation, every man, and every woman must work out their own salvation. Give them ideas—that is the only help they require and then the rest must follow as the effect. Ours is to put the chemicals together, the crystallization comes in the law of nature. (CW. 4.362)

The great difficulty in the way of educating the poor is this. Supposing even your Highness (Maharaja of Mysore) opens a free school in every village, still it would do no good, for the

poverty in India is such, that the poor boys would rather go to help their fathers in the fields, or otherwise try to make a living, than come to the school. Now if the mountain does not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. If the poor boy cannot come to education, education must go to him. There are thousands of single-minded, self-sacrificing *sannyāsins* in our own country, going from village to village, teaching religion. If some of them can be organized as teachers of secular things also, they will go from place to place, from door to door, not only preaching, but teaching also. Suppose two of these men go to a village in the evening with a camera, a globe, some maps, etc. They can teach a great deal of astronomy and geography to the ignorant. By telling stories about different nations, they can give the poor a hundred times more information through the ear than they can get in a lifetime through books. (CW. 4.363)

Engrossed in the struggle for existence, they (the lower classes) had not the opportunity for the awakening of knowledge. They have worked so long uniformly like machines... and the clever educated section have taken the substantial part of the fruits of their labour. ... But times have changed. The lower classes are gradually awakening to this fact and making a united front against this... The upper classes will no longer be able to repress the lower, try they ever so much. The well-being of the higher classes now lies in helping the lower to get their legitimate rights. Therefore, I say, set yourselves to the task of spreading education among the masses. Tell them and make them understand, 'You are our brothers—a part and parcel of our bodies,'... If they receive this sympathy from you, their enthusiasm for work will be increased a hundredfold.

(CW. 7.148-9)

If the poor cannot come to education, education must reach them at the plough, in the factory, everywhere. (CW. 8.308)

How can there be any progress of the country without the spread of education, the dawning of knowledge? Even no real effort or exertion in the cause is visible among the few in your country who are the promise of the future, you who have received the blessings of education. But know for certain that absolutely nothing can be done to improve the state of things, unless there is spread of education first among the women and the masses. (CW. 6.489)

My whole ambition in life is to set in motion a machinery which will bring noble ideas to the door of everybody, and then let men and women settle their own fate. Let them know what our forefathers as well as other nations have thought on the most momentous questions of life. Let them see specially what others are doing now, and then decide. (CW. 5.29)

We must have a hold on the spiritual and secular education of the nation. ... You must dream it, you must talk it, you must think it, and you must work it out. (CW. 3.301)

Intelligence must not remain the monopoly of the cultured few; it will be disseminated from higher to lower classes. Education is coming, and compulsory education will follow. (CW. 5.199)

I call him a traitor who, having been educated, nursed in luxury by the heart's blood of the downtrodden millions of toiling poor, never even takes a thought for them. (CW. 8.329-30)

You must get together a number of poor, indigent folk. Having done all this, show them pictures to teach them astronomy, geography, etc., ... Try to have their eyes opened as to what has taken place or is taking place in different countries, what this world is like and, so forth. You have got lots of poor and ignorant folk there. Go to their cottages, from door to door, in the evening, at noon, any time—and open their eyes. Books etc., won't do—give them oral teaching. (CW. 6.289-90)

Educate and raise the masses, and thus alone a nation is possible. Our reformers do not see where the wound is, they want to save the nation by marrying the widows; do you think that a nation is saved by the number of husbands its widows get? ... The real nation who live in cottage have forgotten their manhood, their individuality. Trodden under the foot of the Hindu, Mussulman, or Christian, they have come to think that they are born to be trodden under the foot of everybody who has money enough in his pocket. They are to be given back their lost individuality. They are to be educated. ... How? You have seen my brethren. Now I can get hundreds of such, all over India, unselfish, good and educated. Let these men go from village to village bringing not only religion to the door of everyone but also education. So I have a nucleus of organizing the widows also as instructors to our women.
(CW. 8.307-8)

India is to be raised, the poor are to be fed, education is to be spread, and the evil of priestcraft is to be removed.
(CW. 4.368)

If there is inequality in nature, still there must be equal chance for all—or if greater for some and for some less—the weaker should be given more chance than the strong. In other words,

a brahmin is not so much in need of education as a *chandāla*. If the son of a brahmin needs one teacher, that of a *chandāla* needs ten. For, greater help must be given to him whom nature has not endowed with an acute intellect from birth.

(CW. 6.319)

There is some chance if you can impart education to the masses. Is there a greater strength than that of knowledge? Can you give them education? Name me the country where rich men ever helped anybody! In all countries it is the middle classes that do all great works. (CW. 6.325)

It is culture that withstands shocks, not a simple mass of knowledge. … We all know in modern times of nations, which have masses of knowledge, but what of them? They are like tigers; they are like savages, because culture is not there. Knowledge is only skin-deep, as civilization is, and a little scratch brings out the old savage. Such things happen; this is the danger. Teach the masses in the vernaculars, give them ideas; they will get information, but something more is necessary; give them culture. Until you give them that, there can be no permanence in the raised condition of the masses. (CW. 3.291)

All the members of a society ought to have the same opportunity for obtaining wealth, education, or knowledge. The second question is: those who say that if the ignorant and the poor be given liberty, i.e. full right to their body, wealth, etc., and if their children have the same opportunity to better their condition and acquire knowledge as those of the rich and the highly situated, they would become perverse—do they say this for the good of society or blinded by their selfishness? In England too I have heard, 'Who will serve us if the lower classes get education?' (CW. 5.146)

EDUCATING THE WOMEN

They [women] have many and grave problems, but none that are not to be solved by that magic word 'education'.
(CW. 5.231)

Brahmachāriṇis of education and character should take up the task of teaching. (CW. 6.489)

In villages and towns they will open centres and strive for the spread of female education. Through such devout preachers of character there will be the real spread of female education in the country. (CW. 7.217-8)

History and the *Purānas*, housekeeping and the arts, the duties of home life and principles that make for the development of an ideal character have to be taught. (CW. 6.489)

Other matters such as sewing, culinary art, rules of domestic work, and upbringing of children, will also be taught while *japa*, worship, and meditation shall form an indispensable part of the teaching. (CW. 7.217)

Along with other things they should acquire the spirit of valour and heroism. In the present day it has become necessary for them also to learn self-defence. (CW. 5.342)

With such an education women will solve their own problems. They have all the time been trained in helplessness, servile dependence on others and so they are good only to weep their eyes out at the slightest approach of a mishap or danger.
(CW. 5. 342)

Educate your women first and leave them to themselves; then they will tell you what reforms are necessary for them.
(CW. 6.115)

One does not find any real endeavour in your country to get the women educated. You, the men, are educating yourselves to develop your manhood, but what are you doing to educate and advance those who share all your happiness and misery, who lay down their lives to serve you in your homes?
(CW. 6.488)

How many schools have been started on your own national lines...? But alas, such a system does not obtain even among the men of your country, what to speak of women! It is seen from the official statistics that only three or four per cent of the people in India are educated, and not even one per cent of the women. (CW. 6.488-9)

Religion, arts, science, housekeeping, cooking, sewing, hygiene—the simple essential points in these subjects ought to be taught to our women. ... The Mahākāli Pāṭaśālā is to a great extent moving in the right direction. But only teaching rites of worship won't do; their education must be an eye-opener in all matters. Ideal characters must always be presented before the view of the girls to imbue them with a devotion to lofty principles of selflessness. The noble examples of Sitā, Sāvitri, Damayanti, Lilāvati, Khana and Mirā should be brought

home to their minds, and they should be inspired to mould their own lives in the light of these. (CW. 6.493-4)

In these modern days there is a greater impetus towards higher education on the European lines, and the trend of opinion is strong towards women getting this higher education. Of course, there are some people in India who do not want it, but those who do want it carried the day. It is a strange fact that Oxford and Cambridge are closed to women today, so are Harvard and Yale; but Kolkata University opened its doors to women more than twenty years ago. I remember that the year I graduated, several girls came out and graduated—the same standard, the same course, the same in everything as the boys; and they did very well indeed. (CW. 8.69)

I should very much like our women to have your intellectuality, but not if it must be at the cost of purity [stated in New York]. I admire you for all that you know, but I dislike the way that you cover what is bad with roses and call it good. Intellectuality is not the highest good. Morality and spirituality are the things for which we strive. (CW. 5.412)

I have it in my mind to train up some *brahmachārins* and *brahmachāriṇis*, the former of whom will eventually take the vow of *sannyāsa* and try to carry the light of education among the masses, from village to village, throughout the country, while the latter will do the same among women. But the whole work must be done in the style of our own country. Just as centres have to be started for men, so also centres have to be started for teaching women. ... Principles that make for the development of an ideal character have to be taught with the help of modern science, and the women students must be trained up in ethical and spiritual life. We must see to their

growing up as ideal matrons of home in time. The children of such mothers will make further progress in the virtues that distinguish the mothers. (CW. 6.489)

To make a beginning in women's education: our Hindu women easily understand what chastity means, because it is their heritage. Now, first of all, intensify that ideal within them above everything else, so that they may develop a strong character by the force of which, in every stage of their life, whether married, or single if they prefer to remain so, they will not be in the least afraid even to give up their lives rather than flinch an inch from their chastity. Is it little heroism to be able to sacrifice one's life for the sake of one's ideal, whatever that ideal may be? (CW. 5.342-3)

Women must be put in a position to solve their own problems in their own way. No one can or ought to do this for them. And our Indian women are as capable of doing it as any in the world. (CW. 5.229-30)

It is only in the homes of educated and pious mothers that great men are born. And you have reduced your women to something like manufacturing machines; alas, for heaven's sake, is this the outcome of your education? The uplift of the women, the awakening of the masses must come first, and then only can any real good come about for the country, for India. (CW. 6.489-90)

How far is the birthplace of this venerable lady (referring to Tapasvini Mātāji of Mahākāli Pāṭaśālā)! She has renounced everything of her worldly life, and yet how diligent in the service of humanity! Had she not been a woman, could she ever have undertaken the teaching of women in the way she

is doing? What I saw here was all good, but that some male householders should be pitch-forked as teachers is a thing I cannot approve of. The duty of teaching in the school ought to devolve in every respect on educated widows and *brahmachāriṇis*. (CW. 6.490-1)

In India alone the sight of feminine modesty and reserve soothes the eye! With such materials of great promise, you could not, alas, work out their uplift! You did not try to infuse the light of knowledge into them! If they get the right sort of education, they may well turn out to be ideal women in the world. (CW. 6.491)

These celibate nuns will in time be the teachers and preachers of the Math. In villages and towns they will open centers and strive for the spread of female education. Through such devout preachers of character there will be the real spread of female education in the country. (CW. 7.217-8)

They must be given education and left to themselves. After that they will act as they think best. Even after marriage and entering the world, the girls (so) educated will inspire their husbands with noble ideals and be the mothers of heroic sons. (CW. 7.218)

I ask you all so earnestly to do likewise and open girls' schools in every village and try to uplift them. If the women are raised, then their children will by their noble actions glorify the name of the country—then will culture, knowledge, power, and devotion awaken in the land. (CW. 7.220)

Biligiri has two widowed daughters. Kindly educate them and make special efforts that through them more such widowed

women get a thorough grounding in their own religion and learn a little English and Sanskrit. (CW. 8.397)

Disciple: But, Sir, contrary results appear to have come out of the present female education. With just a smattering of education, they take merely to the Western modes of living.

Swamiji: In the beginning a few mistakes like that are unavoidable. When a new idea is preached in the country, some, failing to grasp it properly, go wrong in that way. But what matters it to the well-being of society at large? Well, those who are pioneers of the little bit of female education that now obtains in the country were undoubtedly very great-hearted. But the truth is that some defect or other must creep into that learning or culture which is not founded on a religious basis. But now female education is to be spread with religion as its centre. All other training should be secondary to religion. Religious training, the formation of character and observance of the vow of celibacy—these should be attended to. In the female education which has obtained up till now in India, it is religion that has been made a secondary concern, hence those defects you were speaking of have crept in. But no blame attaches therefore to the women. (CW. 7.220-1)

I have never seen women elsewhere as cultured and educated as they are here[in America]. Well-educated men there are in our country, but you will scarcely find anywhere women like those here. It is indeed true, that 'the Goddess Herself lives in the houses of virtuous men as Lakshmi'. I have seen thousands of women here whose hearts are as pure and stainless as snow. Oh, how free they are! It is they who control social and civic duties. Schools and colleges are full of women, and in our country women cannot be safely allowed to walk in the streets! ... And how pure and chaste are they here! Few women are

married before twenty or twenty-five and they are as free as the birds in the air. They go to market, school, and college, earn money, and do all kinds of work. Those who are well-to-do devote themselves to doing good to the poor. And what are we doing? We are very regular in marrying our girls at eleven years of age lest they should become corrupt and immoral. What does our Manu enjoin? 'Daughters should be supported and educated with as much care and attention as the sons'. As sons should be married after observing *brahmacharya* up to the thirtieth year, so daughters also must observe *brahmacharya* and be educated by their parents. But what are we actually doing? Can you better the condition of your women? Then there will be hope for your well-being. Otherwise you will remain as backward as you are now. (CW. 5.25-6)

LANGUAGE

We haven't even got a single book well suited for the little boys. ... We must compose some books... with short stories from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, the Upanishads, etc., in very easy and simple language, and these are to be given to our little boys to read. (CW. 5.371)

The greatness of a teacher consists in the simplicity of his language. (CW. 5.106)

'Arise, awake, sleep no more; within each of you there is the power to remove all wants and all miseries. Believe this, and that power will be manifested.' Teach this to all, and, with that, spread among the masses in plain language the central truths of science, philosophy, history, and geography. I have a plan to open a centre with the unmarried youths; first of all I shall teach them, and then carry on the work through them. (CW. 6.454)

Simplicity is the secret. My ideal of language is my Master's language, most colloquial and yet most expressive. It must express the thought which is intended to be conveyed. (CW. 5.259)

The Bengali language must be modelled not after the Sanskrit, but rather after the Pāli, which has a strong resemblance

to it. In coining or translating technical terms in Bengali, one must, however, use all Sanskrit words for them, and an attempt should be made to coin new words. For this purpose, if a collection is made from a Sanskrit dictionary of all those technical terms, then it will help greatly the constitution of the Bengali language. (CW. 5.259)

THE MOTHER TONGUE

You will understand the difficulty when I tell you that I have been studying this language (Sanskrit) all my life, and yet every new book is new to me. How much more difficult would it then be for people who never had time to study the language thoroughly! Therefore the ideas must be taught in the language of the people. (CW. 3.290)

Every man is capable of receiving knowledge if it is imparted in his own language. A teacher who cannot convince others should weep on account of his own inability to teach the people in their own language, instead of cursing them and dooming them to live in ignorance and superstition, setting up the plea that the higher knowledge is not for them. (CW. 5.263)

Of course, scholarship is an excellent thing; but cannot scholarship be displayed through any other medium than a language that is stiff and unintelligible, that is unnatural and merely artificial? Is there no room for art in the spoken language? (CW. 6.187)

The language in which we naturally express ourselves, in which we communicate our anger, grief, or love, etc.—there cannot be a fitter language than that. We must stick to that idea, that manner of expression, that diction and all. No

artificial language can ever have that force, and that brevity and expressiveness, or admit of being given any turn you please, as that spoken language. Language must be made like pure steel—turn and twist it any way you like; it is again the same—it cleaves a rock in twain at one stroke, without its edge being turned. Our language is becoming artificial by imitating the slow and pompous movement—and only that—of Sanskrit. And language is the chief means and index of a nation's progress. (CW. 6.187-8)

In our country, owing to all learning being in Sanskrit from the ancient times, there has arisen an immeasurable gulf between the learned and the common folk. All the great personages, from Buddha down to Chaitanya and Ramakrishna, who came for the well-being of the world, taught the common people in the language of the people themselves.

(CW. 6.187)

What is the use of creating an unnatural language to the exclusion of the natural one? Do you not think out your scholastic researches in the language which you are accustomed to speak at home? Why then do you introduce such a queer and unwieldy thing when you proceed to put them in black and white? The language in which you think out philosophy and science in your mind and argue with others in public—is not that the language for writing philosophy and science?

(CW. 6.187)

THE SANSKRIT LANGUAGE

My idea is first of all to bring out the gems of spirituality that are stored up in our books and in the possession of a few only, hidden, as it were, in monasteries and forests—to bring them out; to bring the knowledge out of them, not only from the hands where it is hidden, but from the still more inaccessible chest, the language in which it is preserved, the incrustation of centuries of Sanskrit words. In one word, I want to make them popular. I want to bring out these ideas and let them be the common property of all, of every man in India, whether he knows the Sanskrit language or not. ... Therefore the ideas must be taught in the language of the people; at the same time, Sanskrit education must go on along with it, because the very sound of Sanskrit words gives a prestige and a power and a strength to the race. The attempts of the great Rāmānuja and of Chaitanya and of Kabir to raise the lower classes of India show that marvellous results were attained during the lifetime of those great prophets; yet the later failures have to be explained, and cause shown why the effect of their teachings stopped almost within a century of the passing away of these great Masters. The secret is here. They raised the lower classes; they had all the wish that these should come up, but they did not apply their energies to the spreading of the Sanskrit language among the masses. (CW. 3.290-1)

Even the great Buddha made one false step when he stopped the Sanskrit language from being studied by the masses. He wanted rapid and immediate results, and translated and preached in the language of the day, Pāli. That was grand; he spoke in the language of the people, and the people understood him... It spread the ideas quickly and made them reach far and wide. But along with that, Sanskrit ought to have spread. Knowledge came, but the prestige was not there, culture was not there. ... Until you give them that,... there will be another caste created, having the advantage of the Sanskrit language, which will quickly get above the rest and rule them all the same. (CW. 3.291)

Why do you not become Sanskrit scholars? Why do you not spend millions to bring Sanskrit education to all the castes of India? (CW. 3.298)

Sanskrit is the language of God. (CW. 3.513)

Sanskrit is the divine language. (CW. 3.513)

Sanskrit and prestige go together in India. (CW. 3.299)

One thing that I am very sorry to notice in these parts is the thorough want of Sanskrit and other learning. The people of this part of the country have for their religion a certain bundle of local superstitions about eating, drinking, and bathing, and that is about the whole of their religion. (CW. 8.290)

In philology, our Sanskrit language is now universally acknowledged to be the foundation of all European languages, which, in fact, are nothing but jargonized Sanskrit. (CW. 2.512)

India has given to antiquity the earliest scientifical physicians, and, according to Sir William Hunter, she has even contributed to modern medical science by the discovery of various chemicals and by teaching you how to reform misshapen ears and noses. Even more it has done in mathematics, for algebra, geometry, astronomy, and the triumph of modern science—mixed mathematics—were all invented in India, just so much as the ten numerals, the very cornerstone of all present civilization, were discovered in India, and are in reality, Sanskrit words. (CW. 2.511)

HIGHER EDUCATION

Our pedagogues are making parrots of our boys and ruining their brains by cramming a lot of subjects into them. ... Goodness gracious! What a fuss and fury about graduating and after a few days all cools down! And after all that, what is it they learn but that what religion and customs we have are all bad, and what the Westerners have are all good! At last, they cannot keep the wolf from the door! What does it matter if this higher education remains or goes?

(CW. 5.366)

Does higher education mean mere study of material sciences and turning out things of everyday use by machinery? The use of higher education is to find out how to solve the problems of life, and this is what is engaging the profound thought of the modern civilized world, but it was solved in our country thousands of years ago. (CW. 5.368)

There is no harm in preaching the idea of elevating the masses by means of a central college, and bringing education as well as religion to the door of the poor by means of missionaries trained in this college. (CW. 5.30)

It is intended to extend the operations of the Math, by educating in the Math as many young men as the funds can afford, in both Western Science and Indian Spirituality, so that in

addition to the advantages of a University education, they will acquire a manly discipline by living in contact with their teachers. (CW. 5.435)

The masses in our country are like the sleeping Leviathan. The education imparted by the present university system reaches one or two per cent of the masses only. And even those who get that do not succeed in their endeavours of doing any good to their country. But it is not their fault, poor fellows! As soon as they come out of their college, they find themselves fathers of several children. (CW. 5.380)

Those who are removed one stage higher than these, having read a few pages of English, hang about the thresholds of public offices with petitions in their hands. In the case of a post of twenty or thirty rupees falling vacant, five hundred B.A.s and M.A.s will apply for it! And, dear me! How curiously worded these petitions are! 'I have nothing to eat at home, sir, my wife and children are starving; I most humbly implore you, sir, to give me some means to provide for myself and my family, or we shall die of starvation!'' Even when they enter into service, they cast all self-respect to the winds and servitude in its worst form is what they practice. Such is the condition, then, of the masses. The highly-educated, prominent men among you form themselves into societies and clamour at the top of their voices: ''Alas! India is going to ruin, day by day!' (CW. 5.354)

We have seen that of books, of education in our sense of the word, he [Sri Ramakrishna] had none, and so much the more natural, so much the more healthy, was his mind, so much the purer his thoughts, undiluted by drinking in the thoughts of others. Because he did not go to the university, therefore he

thought for himself. Because we have spent half of our lives in the university we are filled with a collection of other people's thoughts. (CW. 4.167-8)

The old Sanskrit universities are mainly composed of boys. The girls very rarely go up to those universities; but there are a few exceptions. (CW. 8.69)

I studied hard for twelve years and became a graduate of Kolkata University; now I can scarcely make $5.00 a month in my country. Would you believe it? It is actually a fact. So these educational institutions of foreigners are simply to get a lot of useful, practical slaves for a little money—to turn out a host of clerks, postmasters, telegraph operators, and so on. (CW. 8.69-70)

We must have a college in Madras to teach comparative religions, Sanskrit, the different schools of Vedanta, and some European languages; we must have a press, and papers printed in English and in the Vernaculars. When this is done, then I shall know that you have accomplished something. (CW. 5.67)

It would be well to open a Theological College in Madras, and then gradually extend its scope, to give a thorough education to young men in the Vedas and the different Bhāshyas and philosophies, including a knowledge of the other religions of the world. At the same time a paper in English and the vernacular should be started as an organ of the College. (CW. 4.371)

Take your universities. What have they done during the fifty years [this was told at Madras in 1897] of their existence?

They have not produced one original man. They are merely an examining body. The idea of the sacrifice for the common weal is not yet developed in our nation. (CW. 5.224)

Q. What is the defect in the present university system?
A. It is almost wholly one of defects. Why, it is nothing but a perfect machine for turning out clerks. I would even thank my stars if that were all. But no! See how men are becoming destitute of *śraddhā* and faith. They assert that the *Gītā* is only an interpolation, and that the Vedas are but rustic songs! They like to master every detail concerning things and nations outside of India, but if you ask them, they do not know even the names of their own forefathers up to the seventh generation, not to speak of the fourteenth! (CW. 5.364-5)

There should be an institution to train teachers who must go about preaching religion and giving secular education to our people; they must carry both. (CW. 3.303)

TECHNICAL EDUCATION

What we need, you know, is to study, independent of foreign control, different branches of the knowledge that is our own, and with it the English language and Western science; we need technical education and all else that may develop industries so that men, instead of seeking for service, may earn enough to provide for themselves, and save something against a rainy day. (CW. 5.368-9)

If I can get some unmarried graduates, I may try to send them over to Japan and make arrangements for their technical education there, so that when they come back, they may turn their knowledge to the best account for India. What a good thing that would be! (CW. 5.372)

It would be better if the people got a little technical education, so that they might find work and earn their bread, instead of dawdling about and crying for service. (CW. 5.367)

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

We may talk and reason all our lives, but we shall not understand a word of truth, until we experience it ourselves. You cannot hope to make a man a surgeon by simply giving him a few books. You cannot satisfy my curiosity to see a country by showing me a map; I must have actual experience. Maps can only create curiosity in us to get more perfect knowledge. Beyond that, they have no value whatever. (CW. 1.185)

We may read books, hear lectures, and talk miles, but experience is the one teacher, the one eye-opener. It is best as it is. We learn, through smiles and tears we learn. (CW. 8.492-3)

Experience is the only teacher we have. (CW. 1.185)

Practice is absolutely necessary. You may sit down and listen to me by the hour every day, but if you do not practise, you will not get one step further. It all depends on practice. We never understand these things until we experience them. We will have to see and feel them for ourselves. Simply listening to explanations and theories will not do. (CW. 1.139)

All our knowledge is based upon experience. (CW. 1.125)

It is practice first, and knowledge afterwards. (CW. 2.317)

Lectures won't do any good in this country. Our educated countrymen would hear them and, at best, would cheer and

clap their hands, saying, 'Well done'; that is all. Then they would go home and digest, as we say, everything they had heard, with their meal! What good will hammering do on a piece of rusty old iron? It will only crumble into pieces. First, it should be made red-hot and then it can be moulded into any shape by hammering. Nothing will avail in our country without setting a glowing and living example before the people. (CW. 5.352)

I have heard it said that our masses are dense, that they do not want any education, and that they do not care for any information. I had at one time a foolish leaning towards that opinion myself, but I find experience is a far more glorious teacher than any amount of speculation, or any amount of books written by globe-trotters and hasty observers. This experience teaches me that they are not dense, that they are not slow, that they are as eager and thirsty for information as any race under the sun. (CW. 3.147)

You must learn to make the physique very strong and teach the same to others. Don't you find me exercising everyday with dumb-bells even now? Walk in the mornings and evenings and do physical labour. Body and mind must run parallel. It won't do to depend on others in everything. When the necessity of strengthening the physique is brought home to people, they will exert themselves of their own accord. It is to make them feel this need that education is necessary at the present moment. (CW. 7.171-2)

The modern student is not practical. He is quite helpless. What our students want is not so much muscularity of body as hardihood. They are wanting in self-help. They are not accustomed to use their eyes and hands. No handicraft is

taught. The present system of English education is entirely literary. The student must be made to think for himself and work for himself. Suppose there is a fire. He is the first to come forward and put out the fire who is accustomed to use his eyes and hands. ... The education that is given is one-sided, weakening, it is killing by inches. The children are made to cram too much of useless matter, and are incarcerated in school rooms fifty or seventy in each, five hours together. ... It is forgotten that the future health of the man is in the child. It is forgotten that nature can never be cheated and things cannot be pushed too early. In giving education to a child the law of growth has to be obeyed. And we must learn to wait. Nothing is more important than that the child must have a strong and healthy body. (CW. 9.546-7)

It will not do merely to listen to great principles. You must apply them in the practical field, turn them into constant practice. (CW. 7.117)

CONCENTRATION

There is only one method by which to attain knowledge, that which is called concentration. (CW. 1.130)

The very essence of education is concentration of mind. (CW. 6.38)

We have but one method of acquiring knowledge. From the lowest man to the highest yogi, all have to use the same method; and that method is what is called concentration. The chemist who works in his laboratory concentrates all the powers of his mind, brings them into one focus, and throws them on the elements; and the elements stand analyzed, and thus his knowledge comes. The astronomer has also concentrated the powers of his mind and brought them into one focus; and he throws them on to objects through his telescope; and stars and systems roll forward and give up their secrets to him. So it is in every case—with the professor in his chair, the student with his book—with every man who is working to know. ... The more this power of concentration, the more knowledge is acquired. (CW. 2.390-1)

The main difference between men and the animals is the difference in their power of concentration. ... An animal has very little power of concentration. Those who have trained animals find much difficulty in the fact that the animal is constantly forgetting what is told him. He cannot concentrate

his mind long upon anything at a time. Herein is the difference between man and the animals... The difference in their power of concentration also constitutes the difference between man and man. Compare the lowest with the highest man. The difference is in the degree of concentration. (CW. 6.37)

All success in any line of work is the result of this. High achievements in art, music, etc., are the results of concentration. (CW. 6.37)

The power of concentration is the only key to the treasure-house of knowledge. ... In the present state of our body we are so much distracted, and the mind is frittering away its energies upon a hundred sorts of things. As soon as I try to calm my thoughts and concentrate my mind upon any one object of knowledge, thousands of undesired impulses rush into the brain, thousands of thoughts rush into the mind and disturb it. How to check it and bring the mind under control is the whole subject of study in *Rāja-Yoga*. (CW. 2.391)

The practice of meditation... leads to mental concentration. (CW. 6.486)

To me the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collecting of facts. If I had to do my education over again and had any voice in the matter, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment, and then with a perfect instrument I could collect facts at will. Side by side, in the child, should be developed the power of concentration and detachment. (CW. 6.38-9)

Education is not filling the mind with a lot of facts. Perfecting the instrument and getting complete mastery of my own mind

[is the ideal of education]. If I want to concentrate my mind upon a point, it goes there, and the moment I call, it is free [again]. (CW. 1.510)

Concentration is the essence of all knowledge; nothing can be done without it. Ninety per cent of thought force is wasted by the ordinary human being, and therefore he is constantly committing blunders; the trained man or mind never makes a mistake. (CW. 6.123-4)

The present system of education is all wrong. The mind is crammed with facts before it knows how to think. Control of the mind should be taught first. If I had my education to get over again and had any voice in the matter, I would learn to master my mind first, and then gather facts if I wanted them. It takes people a long time to learn things because they can't concentrate their minds at will. (CW. 8.280)

Power comes to him who observes unbroken *brahmacharya* for a period of twelve years. (CW. 5.358)

Complete continence gives great intellectual and spiritual power. (CW. 7.67)

Controlled desire leads to the highest result. Transform the sexual energy into spiritual energy, but do not emasculate, because that is throwing away the power. The stronger this force, the more can be done with it. Only a powerful current of water can do hydraulic mining. (CW. 7.69)

By the observance of strict *brahmacharya* (continence) all learning can be mastered in a very short time—one has an unfailing memory of what one hears or knows but once. It

is owing to this want of continence that everything is on the brink of ruin in our country. (CW. 7.224)

The chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will-power. Without chastity there can be no spiritual strength. Continence gives wonderful control over mankind. The spiritual leaders of men have been very continent, and this is what gave them power. (CW. 1.263)

Chastity in thought, word, and deed, always, and in all conditions, is what is called *brahmacharya*. (CW. 1.190)

Unchaste imagination is as bad as unchaste action. (CW. 7.69)

Every boy should be trained to practise absolute *brahmacharya*, and then, and then only, faith—*śraddhā*—will come. (CW. 5.369)

The *brahmachārin* must be sexually pure in thought, word, and deed. (CW. 7.67)

No one could obtain intellectual greatness until he was physically pure. Morality gave strength; the immoral were always weak, and could never raise themselves intellectually, much less spiritually. Directly [as] immorality began to enter the national life its foundations commenced to rot. As the life blood of every nation was to be found in the schools, where boys and girls were receiving their education, it was absolutely essential that the young students should be pure, and this purity must be taught them. (CW. 9.519)

The yogis claim that of all the energies that are in the human body the highest is what they call '*ojas*'. Now this *ojas* is stored up in the brain, and the more *ojas* is in a man's head, the more powerful he is, the more intellectual, the more spiritually strong. One man may speak beautiful language and beautiful thoughts, but they do not impress people; another man speaks neither beautiful language nor beautiful thoughts, yet his words charm. Every movement of his is powerful. That is the power of *ojas*.

Now in every man there is more or less of this *ojas* stored up. All the forces that are working in the body in their highest become *ojas*. You must remember that it is only a question of transformation. ... The yogis say that that part of the human energy which is expressed as sex energy, in sexual thought, when checked and controlled, easily becomes changed into *ojas*, ... He tries to take up all his sexual energy and convert it into *ojas*. It is only the chaste man or woman who can make the *ojas* rise and store it in the brain; that is why chastity has always been considered the highest virtue. A man feels that if he is unchaste, spirituality goes away, he loses mental vigour and moral stamina. (CW. 1.169-70)

THE MIND

All these senses, external and internal, must be under the disciple's control. By hard practice he has to arrive at the stage where he can assert his mind against the senses, against the commands of nature. He should be able to say to his mind, 'You are mine; I order you, do not see or hear anything'. ... Next, the mind must be made to quiet down. It is rushing about. Just as I sit down to meditate, all the vilest subjects in the world come up. The whole thing is nauseating. Why should the mind think thoughts I do not want it to think? I am as it were a slave to the mind. (CW. 8.109-10)

The disciple must have great power of endurance. Life seems comfortable; and you find the mind behaves well when everything is going well with you. But if something goes wrong, your mind loses its balance. That is not good. Bear all evil and misery without one murmur of hurt, without one thought of unhappiness, resistance, remedy or retaliation. That is true endurance. (CW. 8.110)

All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind; the infinite library of the universe is in your own mind. The external world is simply the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind, but the object of your study is always your own mind. The falling of an apple gave the suggestion to Newton, and he studied his own mind. He rearranged all the previous links of thought in his mind and

discovered a new link among them, which we call the law of gravitation. It was not in the apple nor in anything in the centre of the earth. (CW. 1.28)

Never allow weakness to overtake your mind. (CW. 7.234)

Physical weakness is the cause of at least one-third of our miseries. We are lazy, we cannot work; we cannot combine … we speak of many things parrot-like but never do them; speaking and not doing has become a habit with us. What is the cause of that? Physical weakness. This sort of weak brain is not able to do anything; we must strengthen it. (CW. 3.241-2)

You have to build the body by good nutritious food—then only will the mind be strong. The mind is but the subtle part of the body. You must retain great strength in your mind and words. 'I am low, I am low'—repeating these ideas in the mind, man belittles and degrades himself. … He alone who is always awake to the idea of freedom, becomes free; he who thinks he is bound, endures life after life in the state of bondage. … Be a hero. Always say, 'I have no fear'. … Fear is death, fear is sin, fear is hell, fear is unrighteousness, fear is wrong life. All the negative thoughts and ideas that are in this world have proceeded from this evil spirit of fear. … Therefore I say, 'Be fearless, be fearless'. (CW. 7.135-6)

All knowledge depends upon calmness of mind. (CW. 7.72)

If you have to think, think good thoughts, great thoughts. (CW. 8.131)

It is our own mental attitude which makes the world what it is for us. Our thoughts make things beautiful, our thoughts

make things ugly. The whole world is in our minds. Learn to see things in the proper light. (CW. 1.441)

Doing is very good, but that comes from thinking. ... Fill the brain, therefore, with high thoughts, highest ideals, place them day and night before you, and out of that will come great work. (CW. 2.86)

We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care of what you think. (CW. 7.14)

What we think we become. (CW. 8.19)

Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the mind; suggestion is the friction which brings it out. (CW. 1.28)

All knowledge, therefore, secular or spiritual, is in the human mind. In many cases it is not discovered, but remains covered, and when the covering is being slowly taken off, we say, 'We are learning,' and the advance of knowledge is made by the advance of this process of uncovering. The man from whom this veil is being lifted is the more knowing man, the man upon whom it lies thick is ignorant, and the man from whom it has entirely gone is all-knowing, omniscient. (CW. 1.28)

Books suggest the inner light and the method of bringing that out, but we can only understand them when we have earned the knowledge ourselves. When the inner light has flashed for you, let the books go, and look only within. You have in you all and a thousand times more than is in all the books. Never lose faith in yourself, you can do anything in this universe. Never weaken, all power is yours. (CW. 7.85)

POWER OF KNOWLEDGE

Pleasure is not the goal of man, but knowledge. (CW. 1.27)

Knowledge is the goal of all life. (CW. 4.210)

The real life of man consists of knowledge. (CW. 1.52)

Instinct, reason, and inspiration are the three instruments of knowledge. (CW. 2.389)

The gift of knowledge is the highest gift in the world. (CW. 7.256)

No action can give you freedom; only knowledge can make you free. (CW. 7.54)

Knowledge is irresistible; the mind cannot take it or reject it. When it comes the mind has to accept it; so it is not a work of the mind; only, its expression comes in the mind. (CW. 7.54)

Knowledge itself is the highest reward of knowledge. (CW. 1.130)

Knowledge alone can make us perfect. (CW. 7.38)

From my childhood everyone around me taught weakness; I have been told ever since I was born that I was a weak thing. It

is very difficult for me now to realize my own strength, but by analysis and reasoning I gain knowledge of my own strength, I realise it. All the knowledge that we have in this world, where did it come from? It was within us. What knowledge is outside? None. Knowledge was not in matter; it was in man all the time. Nobody ever created knowledge; man brings it from within. (CW. 2.339)

MUSIC AND ART

In music, India gave to the world her system of notation, with the seven cardinal notes and the diatonic scale, all of which we enjoyed as early as 350 B.C., while it came to Europe only in the eleventh century. (CW. 2.511-2)

Music in which the notes follow each other in rapid succession holds the mind readily. A child loves lively music, because the rapidity of the notes gives the mind no chance to wander. (CW. 6.37)

When we hear beautiful music, our minds become fastened upon it. (CW. 6.37)

There is science in *Dhrupad*, *Kheyal*, etc., but it is in *Kirtana*, i.e. *Māthura* and *Viraha* and other like compositions that there is real music—for there is feeling. Feeling is the soul, the secret of everything. There is more music in common people's songs, and they should be collected together. The science of *Dhrupad* etc., applied to the music of *Kirtana* will produce the perfect music. (CW. 7.407)

In literature, our epics and poems and dramas rank as high as those of any language; our '*Shaguntala*' [Shakuntala] was summarized by Germany's greatest poet, as 'heaven and earth united'. India has given to the world the fables of Aesop, which were copied by Aesop from an old Sanskrit book; it has given

the *Arabian Nights*, yes, even the story of Cinderella and the Bean Stalks. (CW. 2.512)

In art, interest must be centred on the principal theme. Drama is the most difficult of all arts. In it two things are to be satisfied—first, the ears, and second, the eyes. To paint a scene, if one thing be painted, it is easy enough; but to paint different things and yet to keep up the central interest is very difficult. Another difficult thing is stage-management, that is, combining different things in such a manner as to keep the central interest intact. (CW. 7.407)

True art can be compared to a lily which springs from the ground, takes its nourishment from the ground, is in touch with the ground, and yet is quite high above it. So art must be in touch with nature—and wherever that touch is gone, art degenerates—yet it must be above nature. (CW. 5.258)

Art is—representing the beautiful. There must be art in everything. The difference between architecture and building is that the former expresses an idea, while the latter is merely a structure built on economical principles. The value of matter depends solely on its capacities of expressing ideas. (CW. 5.259)

In India, music was developed to the full seven notes, even to half and quarter notes, ages ago. India led in music, also in drama and sculpture. Whatever is done now is merely an attempt at imitation. (CW. 4.196-7)

Now will people gradually understand that a language, or art, or music that expresses no meaning and is lifeless, is of no good. Now they will understand that the more strength

is infused into the national life, the more will language, art, and music, etc. become spontaneously instinct with ideas and life. (CW. 6.189)

Glancing at a highly finished painting we cannot understand where its beauty lies. Moreover, unless the eye is, to a certain extent, trained, one cannot appreciate the subtle touches and blendings, the inner genius of a work of art. In painting, by keeping in touch with nature, you can make it as artistic as you like; there is no harm in doing that, and the result will be nothing but good. Similarly, in music, you can display any amount of skill by keeping to science, and it will be pleasing to the ear. Unless each note is given full play in every scale, all the science of music is marred. (CW. 5.361-2)

When one note comes upon another in quick succession, it not only robs music of all grace, but, on the other hand, creates discordance rather. Again, the poetry of music is completely destroyed if there be in it such profuse use of light and short strains just for effect. To sing by keeping to the idea, meant to be conveyed by a song, totally disappeared from our country. Nowadays, it seems, the true art is reviving a little with the improvement in theatres; but, on the other hand, all regard for *rāgas* and *rāginis* is being more and more flung to the winds. (CW. 5.362-3)

CHARACTER-BUILDING

It is nowadays a common practice in our society, to signify virtues or morals as values. This practice is born of a reluctance to use the terms morals and virtues since they carry a religious connotation. But Swami Vivekananda had no such qualms and he does not use the terms values or value education.

Avoiding pedagogic terms, he used words familiar to the common man. He gave a clarion call to cultivate the highest moral and spiritual virtues like faith in one's divine nature (called Atman or Soul or Spirit in different traditions), truth, purity, honesty, perseverance, courage, strength, love, sympathy for and service to all, modesty, humility, and politeness.

The Swami strongly felt that religion should form the core of education. By religion he meant not some sectarian or dogmatic beliefs, but spirituality—the kernel or common essence of all denominational religions. Such education he said, would help an individual to develop a perfect character. Many of his thoughts on cultivating virtues have been compiled in the following two chapters.

1. Character: Its Importance and Making

If you really want to judge of the character of a man, look not at his great performances. Every fool may become a hero at one time or another. Watch a man do his most common actions; those are indeed the things which will tell you the real character of a great man. Great occasions rouse even the lowest of human beings to some kind of greatness, but he

alone is the really great man whose character is great always, the same wherever he be. (CW. 1.29)

Men, men, these are wanted: everything else will be ready, but strong, vigorous, believing young men, sincere to the backbone, are wanted. A hundred such and the world becomes revolutionized. (CW. 3.223-4)

Money does not pay, nor name; fame does not pay, nor learning. It is love that pays; it is character that cleaves its way through adamantine walls of difficulties. (CW. 4.367)

Be moral. Be brave. Be a heart-whole man. Strictly moral, brave unto desperation. Don't bother your head with religious theories. Cowards only sin, brave men never, no, not even in mind. Try to love anybody and everybody … No religion for you, my children, but morality and bravery. No cowardice, no sin, no crime, no weakness—the rest will come of itself. (CW. 5.3)

Nothing else is necessary but these—love, sincerity, and patience. (CW. 4.367)

The road to the Good is the roughest and steepest in the universe. It is a wonder that so many succeed, no wonder that so many fall. Character has to be established through a thousand stumbles. (CW. 8.383)

Therefore, stand up, be bold, be strong. Take the whole responsibility on your own shoulders, and know that you are the creator of your own destiny. (CW. 2.225)

The miseries of the world cannot be cured by physical help only. Until man's nature changes, these physical needs will

always arise, and miseries will always be felt, and no amount of physical help will cure them completely. The only solution of this problem is to make mankind pure. Ignorance is the mother of all the evil and all the misery we see. Let men have light, let them be pure and spiritually strong and educated, then alone will misery cease in the world, not before. We may convert every house in the country into a charity asylum, we may fill the land with hospitals, but the misery of man will still continue to exist until man's character changes.

(CW. 1.53)

Who will give the world light? Sacrifice in the past has been the law, it will be, alas, for ages to come. The earth's bravest and best will have to sacrifice themselves for the good of many, for the welfare of all. Buddhas by the hundred are necessary with eternal love and pity. (CW. 7.501)

Love never fails, my son; today or tomorrow or ages after, truth will conquer. Love shall win the victory. Do you love your fellow men?... If so, you are irresistible. It is character that pays everywhere. (CW. 5.51)

Your country requires heroes; be heroes! (CW. 5.51)

The character of any man, it really is but the aggregate of tendencies, the sum total of the bent of his mind. As pleasure and pain pass before his soul, they leave upon it different pictures, and the result of these combined impressions is what is called a man's character. (CW. 1.27)

Every work that we do, every movement of the body, every thought that we think, leaves such impressions on the mind-stuff, and even when such impressions are not obvious on

the surface, they are sufficiently strong to work beneath the surface, subconsciously. … Each man's character is determined by the sum total of these impressions. If good impressions prevail, the character becomes good, if bad, it becomes bad. (CW. 1.54)

You must have strict morality. Deviate an inch from this, and you are gone for ever. (CW. 7.447)

It is said, 'Habit is second nature', it is first nature also, and the whole nature of man; everything that we are is the result of habit. That gives us consolation, because, if it is only habit, we can make and unmake it at any time. … The only remedy for bad habits is counter habits; all the bad habits that have left their impressions are to be controlled by good habits. Go on doing good, thinking holy thoughts continuously; that is the only way to suppress base impressions. Never say any man is hopeless, because he only represents a character, a bundle of habits, which can be checked by new and better ones. Character is repeated habits, and repeated habits alone can reform character. (CW. 1.207-8)

2. Some Principal Virtues of Character

A. FAITH IN ONE'S DIVINE SELF
B. TRUTH, UNSELFISHNESS, LOVE, AND SERVICE
C. STRENGTH
D. PATRIOTISM

A. FAITH IN ONE'S DIVINE SELF

Faith, faith, faith in ourselves, faith, faith in God—this is the secret of greatness. (CW. 3.190)

All power is within you; you can do anything and everything. Believe in that, do not believe that you are weak. … All power is there. Stand up and express the divinity within you. (CW. 3.284)

Ye are the children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth—sinners! It is a sin to call a man so. (CW. 1.11)

Do you know how much energy, how many powers, how many forces are still lurking behind that frame of yours? What scientist has known all that is in man? Millions of years have passed since man first came here, and yet but one infinitesimal part of his powers has been manifested. Therefore, you must not say that you are weak. How do you know what possibilities lie behind that degradation on the surface? You know but little of that which is within you. For behind you is the ocean of infinite power and blessedness. (CW. 2.301-2)

The history of the world is the history of a few men who had faith in themselves. That faith calls out the divinity within. You can do anything. You fail only when you do not strive sufficiently to manifest infinite power. As soon as a man or a nation loses faith, death comes. (CW. 8.228)

Teach yourselves, teach every one his real nature, call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes. Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will come, and everything that is excellent will come when this sleeping soul is roused to self-conscious activity. (CW. 3.193)

If the fisherman thinks that he is the Spirit, he will be a better fisherman; if the student thinks he is the Spirit, he will be a

better student. If the lawyer thinks that he is the Spirit, he will be a better lawyer. (CW. 3.245)

All beings, great or small, are equally manifestations of God; the difference is only in the manifestation. (CW. 1.424)

This *śraddhā* is what I want, and what all of us here want, this faith in ourselves, and before you is the great task to get that faith. Give up the awful disease that is creeping into our national blood, that idea of ridiculing everything, that loss of seriousness. Give that up. Be strong and have this *śraddhā*, and everything else is bound to follow. (CW. 3.320)

Man is to become divine by realizing the divine. (CW. 1.16)

The ideal of faith in ourselves is of the greatest help to us. If faith in ourselves had been more extensively taught and practiced, I am sure a very large portion of the evils and miseries that we have would have vanished. (CW. 2.301)

B. TRUTH, UNSELFISHNESS, LOVE, AND SERVICE

Truth can be stated in a thousand different ways, yet each one can be true. (CW. 5.410)

Truth is purity, truth is all-knowledge; truth must be strengthening, must be enlightening, must be invigorating. (CW. 3.225)

Truth does not pay homage to any society, ancient or modern. Society has to pay homage to truth or die. Societies should be moulded upon truth, and truth has not to adjust itself to society. (CW. 2.84)

That society is the greatest, where the highest truths become practical. That is my opinion; and if society is not fit for the highest truths, make it so; and the sooner, the better.
(CW. 2.85)

Practise that boldness which dares know the Truth, which dares show the Truth in life. (CW. 2.85)

Truth, purity, and unselfishness—wherever these are present, there is no power below or above the sun to crush the possessor thereof. Equipped with these, one individual is able to face the whole universe in opposition. (CW. 4.279)

Everything can be sacrificed for truth, but truth cannot be sacrificed for anything. (CW 5.410)

Unselfishness is God. (CW. 1.87)

Unselfishness is more paying, only people have not the patience to practise it. (CW. 1.32)

Man thinks foolishly that he can make himself happy, and after years of struggle finds out at last that true happiness consists in killing selfishness and that no one can make him happy except himself. (CW. 1.84)

The only definition that can be given of morality is this: That which is selfish is immoral, and that which is unselfish is moral. (CW. 1.110)

This unselfishness is the test of religion. He who has more of this unselfishness is more spiritual and nearer to Śiva.
(CW. 3.143)

Do not stand on a high pedestal and take five cents in your hand and say, 'Here, my poor man,' but be grateful that the poor man is there, so that by making a gift to him you are able to help yourself. It is not the receiver that is blessed, but it is the giver. Be thankful that you are allowed to exercise your power of benevolence and mercy in the world, and thus become pure and perfect. (CW. 1.76)

He who sees Śiva in the poor, in the weak, and in the diseased, really worships Śiva; and if he sees Śiva only in the image, his worship is but preliminary. He who has served and helped one poor man seeing Śiva in him, without thinking of his caste, or creed, or race, or anything, with him Śiva is more pleased than with the man who sees Him only in temples. (CW. 3.142)

Loving others is virtue; hating others is sin. (CW. 5.419)

Where should you go to seek for God—are not all the poor, the miserable, the weak, Gods? Why not worship them first? (CW. 5.51)

C. STRENGTH

This is the great fact: strength is life, weakness is death. Strength is felicity, life eternal, immortal; weakness is constant strain and misery: weakness is death. (CW. 2.3)

The remedy for weakness is not brooding over weakness, but thinking of strength. Teach men of the strength that is already within them. (CW. 2.300)

Strength and manliness are virtue; weakness and cowardice are sin. Independence is virtue; dependence is sin. Loving

others is virtue; hating others is sin. Faith in God and in one's own Self is virtue; doubt is sin. (CW. 5.419)

Only cowards and those who are weak commit sin and tell lies. The brave are always moral. Try to be moral, try to be brave, try to be sympathizing. (CW. 5.3)

This is the only sin—to say that you are weak, or others are weak. (CW. 2.308)

Infinite strength is religion and God. Avoid weakness and slavery. (CW. 7.13)

D. PATRIOTISM

Whether you believe in spirituality or not, for the sake of the national life, you have to get a hold on spirituality and keep to it. Then stretch the other hand out and gain all you can from other races, but everything must be subordinated to that one ideal of life; and out of that a wonderful, glorious, future India will come—I am sure it is coming—a greater India than ever was. (CW. 3.153-4)

If there is any land on this earth. ... where humanity has attained its highest towards gentleness, towards generosity, towards purity, towards calmness, above all, the land of introspection and of spirituality—it is India. (CW. 3.105)

Here in this blessed land, the foundation, the backbone, the life-centre is religion and religion alone. (CW. 3.148)

In India, religious life forms the centre, the keynote of the whole music of national life. (CW. 3.220)

Our sacred motherland is a land of religion and philosophy—the birthplace of spiritual giants—the land of renunciation, where and where alone, from the most ancient to the most modern times, there has been the highest ideal of life open to man. (CW. 3.137)

Have you got the will to surmount mountain-high obstructions? If the whole world stands against you sword in hand, would you still dare to do what you think is right? ... Have you got that steadfastness? If you have these three things, each one of you will work miracles.

(CW. 3.226-7)

I believe in patriotism, and I also have my own ideal of patriotism. Three things are necessary. ... First, feel from the heart. ... Feel, therefore, my would-be reformers, my would- be patriots! Do you feel? Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and of sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving today, and millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud? Does it make you restless? Does it make you sleepless? Has it gone into your blood, coursing through your veins, becoming consonant with your heartbeats? Has it made you almost mad? Are you seized with that one idea of the misery of ruin, and have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies? Have you done that? That is the first step to become a patriot, the very first step. (CW. 3.225-6)

You may feel, then; but instead of spending your energies in frothy talk, have you found any way out, any practical solution, some help instead of condemnation, some sweet

words to soothe their miseries, to bring them out of this living death? (CW. 3.226)

O India! Forget not... forget not that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper, are thy flesh and blood, thy brothers. (CW. 4.479-80)

When you have men who are ready to sacrifice their everything for their country, sincere to the backbone—when such men arise, India will become great in every respect. It is the men that make the country! (CW. 5.210)

Let us all work hard, my brethren; this is no time for sleep. On our work depends the coming of the India of the future. She is there ready waiting. She is only sleeping. Arise and awake and see her seated here on her eternal throne, rejuvenated, more glorious than she ever was—this motherland of ours. (CW. 3.154)

None can resist her any more; never is she going to sleep any more; no outward powers can hold her back any more; for the infinite giant is rising to her feet. (CW. 3.146)

HARMONY OF RELIGIONS

1. THE ESSENCE OF RELIGION

I look upon religion as the innermost core of education. Mind, I do not mean my own, or any one else's opinion about religion. I think the teacher should take the pupils' starting-point in this ... and enable them to develop along their own line of least resistance. (CW. 5.231)

Religion is not in books, nor in theories, nor in dogmas, nor in talking, not even in reasoning. It is being and becoming. (CW. 3.253)

I do not believe in a God or religion which cannot wipe the widow's tears or bring a piece of bread to the orphan's mouth. (CW. 5.50)

The true eternal principles have to be held before the people. ... First of all, we have to introduce the worship of the great saints. Those great-souled ones who have realised the eternal truths are to be presented before the people as the ideals to be followed;—Sri Rāmachandra, Sri Krishna, Mahāvira, and Sri Ramakrishna among others. (CW. 5.387-8)

Religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in man. (CW. 4.358)

Religion is the manifestation of the natural strength that is in man. (CW. 8.185)

Realization is real religion, all the rest is only preparation.
(CW. 1.232)

The old religions said that he was an atheist who did not believe in God. The new religion says that he is the atheist who does not believe in himself. It means faith in all, because you are all. ... It is the great faith which will make the world better. (CW.2.301)

Every religion and every creed recognizes man as divine.
(CW. 8.199)

Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one or more or all of these—and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.
(CW. 1.257)

Confucius, Moses, and Pythagoras; Buddha, Christ, Mohammed; Luther, Calvin, and the Sikhs; Theosophy, Spiritualism, and the like; all these mean only the preaching of the Divine-in-man. (CW. 8.229)

There are three things in the make-up of man. There is the body, there is the mind, and there is the soul.
(CW. 5.463-64)

After so much austerity, I have understood this as the real truth—God is present in every *jiva* [individual soul]; there is no other God besides that. 'Who serves *jiva*, serves God indeed'. (CW. 7.247)

By the study of different religions we find that in essence they are one. ... There are differences in non-essentials, but in essentials they are all one. (CW. 1. 317-8)

In the first place, all religions admit that, apart from the body which perishes, there is a certain part or something which does not change like the body, a part that is immutable, eternal, that never dies. (CW. 1.318)

Along with this idea of the soul we find another group of ideas in regard to its perfection. (CW. 1.319)

We find that all religions teach the eternity of the soul, as well as that its lustre has been dimmed, and that its primitive purity is to be regained by the knowledge of God. (CW. 1.322)

Temples or churches, books or forms, are simply the kindergarten of religion, to make the spiritual child strong enough to take higher steps. ... Religion is not in doctrines, in dogmas, nor in intellectual argumentation; it is being and becoming, it is realization. (CW. 2.43)

Religions of the world have become lifeless mockeries. What the world wants is character. The world is in need of those whose life is one burning love, selfless. That love will make every word tell like thunderbolt. (CW. 7.501)

Now comes the question: Can religion really accomplish anything? It can. It brings to man eternal life. It has made man what he is, and will make of this human animal a god. That is what religion can do. Take religion from human society and what will remain? Nothing but a forest of brutes. (CW. 3.4)

Religion is the idea which is raising the brute unto man, and man unto God. (CW. 5.409)

My children, the secret of religion lies not in theories but in practice. To be good and to do good—that is the whole of religion. (CW. 6.245)

2. HARMONY OF RELIGIONS

All religions are true. (CW. 6.117)

I learnt from my Master [Sri Ramakrishna] ... the wonderful truth that the religions of the world are not contradictory or antagonistic. They are but various phases of one eternal religion. (CW. 4.180)

Sri Ramakrishna never spoke a harsh word against anyone. So beautifully tolerant was he that every sect thought that he belonged to them. He loved every one. To him all religions were true. (CW. 7.24)

His [Sri Ramakrishna's] whole life was spent in breaking down the barriers of sectarianism and dogma. (CW. 5.186)

Our watchword, then, will be acceptance, and not exclusion. ... I accept all religions that were in the past, and worship with them all; I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of the Mohammedan; I shall enter the Christian's church and kneel before the crucifix; I shall enter the Buddhistic temple, where I shall take refuge in Buddha and in his Law. I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindu, who is trying to see the Light which enlightens the heart of every one.

Not only shall I do all these, but I shall keep my heart open for all that may come in the future. Is God's book finished? Or is it still a continuous revelation going on? It is a marvellous book—these spiritual revelations of the world. The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran, and all other sacred books are but so many pages, and an infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded. ... We take in all that has been in the past, enjoy the light of the present, and open every window of the heart for all that will come in the future. Salutation to all the prophets of the past, to all the great ones of the present, and to all that are to come in the future! (CW. 2.374)

If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this: It has proved to the world that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of the others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of resistance: 'Help and not Fight,' 'Assimilation and not Destruction,' 'Harmony and Peace and not Dissension.'

(CW. 1.24)

I do not deprecate the existence of sects in the world. Would to God there were twenty millions more, for the more there are, there will be a greater field for selection. What I do object to is trying to fit one religion to every case. Though all religions are essentially the same, they must have the varieties of form produced by dissimilar circumstances among different nations. We must each have our own individual religion, individual so far as the externals of it go. (CW. 1.325-6)

Swami Vivekananda in California, 1900

APPENDIX

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA
AS SEEN BY WORLD THINKERS

Rooted in the past and full of pride in India's prestige, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present. ... He was a fine figure of a man, imposing, full of poise and dignity, sure of himself and his mission, and at the same time full of a dynamic and fiery energy and a passion to push India forward.

—Jawaharlal Nehru

Vivekananda was a soul of puissance, if ever there was one, a very lion among men, but the definite work he has left behind is quite incommensurate with our impression of his creative might and energy. We perceive his influence still working gigantically, we know not well how, we know not well where, in something that is not yet formed, something leonine, grand, intuitive, upheaving, that has entered the soul of India, and we say, 'Behold, Vivekananda still lives in the soul of his Mother, and in the souls of her children.'

—Sri Aurobindo

I cannot write about Vivekananda without going into raptures. Few, indeed, could comprehend or fathom him—even amongst those who had the privilege of becoming intimate with him. His personality was rich, profound, and complex, and it was this personality—as distinct from his teachings

and writings—which accounts for the wonderful influence he has exerted on his countrymen. ... Reckless in his sacrifice, unceasing in his activity, boundless in his love, profound and versatile in his wisdom, exuberant in his emotions, merciless in his attacks, but yet simple as a child—he was a rare personality in this world of ours.

It is very difficult to explain the versatile genius of Swami Vivekananda. The impact Swami Vivekananda made on students of our times by his works and speeches far outweighed that made by any other leader of the country. He, as it were, expressed fully their hopes and aspirations.

—Subhas Chandra Bose

Vivekananda not only made us conscious of our strength, he also pointed out our defects and drawbacks. ... Speaking of those who enjoyed the luxury of studying philosophy and the scriptures in the smugness of their retired life, he said football-playing was better than that type of indulgence. Swamiji made us see the truth that *tattva-jnāna*, which had no place in our everyday relationship with our fellow beings, and in our activities was useless and inane.

—Vinoba Bhave

His pre-eminent characteristic was kingliness. He was a born king, and nobody ever came near him either in India or America without paying homage to his majesty. ...His strength and beauty, the grace and dignity of his bearing, the dark light of his eyes, his imposing appearance, and from the moment he began to speak, the splendid music of his rich deep voice enthralled the vast audience of American Anglo-Saxons, previously prejudiced against him on account of his colour. The thought of this warrior prophet of India left a deep mark upon the United States.

It was impossible to imagine him in the second place. Wherever he went he was the first. ... Everybody recognized in him at sight the leader, the anointed of God, the man marked with the stamp of the power to command.

...His words are great music, phrases in the style of Beethoven, stirring rhythms like the march of Handel choruses. I cannot touch these sayings of his, scattered as they are through the pages of books at thirty years' distance, without receiving a thrill through my body like an electric shock. And what shocks, what transports must have been produced when in burning words they issued from the lips of the hero!

—Romain Rolland

Reading and re-reading the works of Vivekananda each time I find in them something new that helps deeper to understand India, its philosophy, the way of life and customs of the people in the past and the present, their dreams of the future. ... I think that Vivekananda's greatest service is the development in his teaching of the lofty ideals of humanism which incorporate the finest features of Indian culture. ... Many years will pass, many generations will come and go, Vivekananda and his time will become the distant past, but never will there fade the memory of the man who all his life dreamed of a better future for his people, who did so much to awaken his compatriots and move India forward.

—E. P. Chelishev

Even now a hundred years after the birth of Narendranath Datta, who later became Swami Vivekananda, it is very difficult to evaluate his importance in the scale of world history. It is certainly far greater than any Western historian or most Indian historians would have suggested at the time of his death. The passing of the years and the many stupendous and

unexpected events which have occurred since then suggests that in centuries to come he will be remembered as one of the main moulders of the modern world, especially as far as Asia is concerned, and as one of the most significant figures in the whole history of Indian religion, comparable in importance to such great teachers as Śankara and Rāmānuja, and definitely more important than the saints of local or regional significance such as Kabir, Chaitanya, and the many Nāyanmārs and Ālwars of South India.

—A. L. Basham

A striking figure, clad in yellow and orange, shining like the sun of India in the midst of the heavy atmosphere of Chicago, a lion head, piercing eyes, mobile lips, movements swift and fast—such was my first impression of Swami Vivekananda, as I met him in one of the rooms set apart for the use of the delegates to the Parliament of Religions. Monk, they called him, not unwarrantably, but warrior-monk was he, and the first impression was of the warrior rather than of the monk, for he was off the platform, and his figure was instinct with pride of country, pride of race—the representative of the oldest of living religions, surrounded by curious gazers of nearly the youngest, and by no means inclined to give step, as though the hoary faith he embodied was in aught inferior to the noblest there. ...Enraptured, the huge multitude hung upon his words; not a syllable must be lost, not a cadence missed! 'That man a heathen!' said one, as he came out of the great hall, 'and we send missionaries to his people! It would be more fitting that they should send missionaries to us.'

—Annie Besant

EDUCATION

COMPILED FROM THE SPEECHES AND WRITINGS OF

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Compiled and Edited by
T. S. AVINASHILINGAM

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DEDICATED

TO

SRIMAT SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ

A Direct Disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.
To whose deep love, affection and inspiration
I owe my spiritual life.

سیواگرام
براہ واردھا (سی-پی)

सेवाग्राम
वर्धा होकर (मध्य प्रांत)

SEVAGRAM
Via WARDHA (C. P.)

Dear Avinashi,

Surely Swami Vivekanand's writings need no introduction from anybody. They make their own irresistible appeal.

22-7-'41

Yours
Bapu

INTRODUCTION

It has been my desire for some time to collect the sayings of Swami Vivekananda on Education. The present Satyagraha movement and incarceration in the Trichy Jail gave me the necessary time for it. The Swami was a great and forceful personality and his sayings on Education are as inspiring as the rest. Some of the sayings may seem to be bearing more on religion than on education. They have been included as it was the opinion of the Swami that a pure and religious life is the foundation of all education and culture.

I am deeply grateful to my revered leader Sjt. C. Rajagopalachariar for his very valuable suggestions and also to Sri K. Ramakotiswara Rao, Editor, 'Triveni', and Sri K. Arunachalam, my brother-worker in the Vidyalaya, for their kind help. We are grateful to Swami Pavitrananda, the President of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas, the publishers of *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* for kindly giving us permission to publish this book.

The references to the various passages in *The Complete Works* have been given at the end of the book.

Sri Ramakrishna Mission
Vidyalaya,
Coimbatore District,
2nd July, 1943.

T. S. AVINASHILINGAM.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIFTH EDITION

We are glad that four editions of this book have come out and the fifth edition will shortly be going to print. It has been translated in many of the Indian languages. Swami Vivekananda came as a dynamic force in the rise of a New India. His words and works continue to be a force even after half a century of his passing away and will continue to be so till the end of time for all seekers of Truth.

This book was first compiled when I was imprisoned during the 1942 freedom movement. Since then independence has been won and we are involved in the grand task of building a glorious India, which the great Swami foresaw and dreamt of. When a large reconstruction work is going on throughout the country, these words of the Swami have a great value in inspiring the thousands of men and women, who are engaged in it.

In this edition some of the chapters have been rewritten. Some new chapters, namely, Development of personality, The end and the means, What is duty, and Work like a master, have been added. We hope and pray that the revised edition will carry the message of the Master to the thousands of teachers, students and others who are engaged in the great task of education and other nation-building activities.

19-8-'57. T. S. AVINASHILINGAM.

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I

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.[1]

Knowledge is inherent in man, no knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside. What we say a man 'knows', should, in strict psychological language, be what he 'discovers' or 'unveils'. What a man 'learns' is really what he 'discovers' by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge. We say Newton discovered gravitation. Was it sitting anywhere in a corner waiting for him? It was in his own mind; the time came and he found it out. All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind; the infinite library of the universe is in your own mind. The external world is only the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind. The falling of an apple gave the suggestion to Newton, and he studied his own mind. He rearranged all the previous links of thought in his mind and discovered a new link among them, which we call the

Knowing is unveiling.

law of gravitation. It was not in the apple nor in anything in the centre of the earth.[2]

All knowledge therefore, secular or spiritual, is in the human mind. In many cases it is not discovered, but remains covered, and when the covering is being slowly taken off, we say 'we are learning', and the advance of knowledge is made by this process of uncovering. The man from whom this veil is being lifted is the more knowing man; the man upon whom it lies thick is ignorant; the man from whom it has entirely gone is all-knowing, omniscient. Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the mind; suggestion is the friction which brings it out.[3] All knowledge and all power are within. What we call powers, secrets of Nature, and force are all within. All knowledge comes from the human soul. Man manifests knowledge, discovers it within himself, which is pre-existing, through eternity.[4]

All knowledge is within.

No one was ever really taught by another. Each of us has to teach himself. The external teacher offers only the suggestion which rouses the internal teacher to work to understand things. Then things will be made clearer to us by our own power of perception and thought, and we shall

Infinite power is in the soul.

realise them in our own souls.[5] The whole of the big banyan tree which covers acres of ground was in the little seed which was perhaps no bigger than one-eighth of a mustard seed. All that mass of energy was there confined. The gigantic intellect, we know, lies coiled up in the protoplasmic cell. It may seem like a paradox, but it is true. Each one of us has come out of one protoplasmic cell and all the powers we possess were coiled up there. You cannot say they came from food, for if you heap up food mountains high, what power comes out of it? The energy was there potentially no doubt, but still there. So is infinite power in the soul of man whether he knows it or not. Its manifestation is only a question of being conscious of it.[6]

The Light Divine within is obscured in most people. It is like a lamp in a cask of iron: no gleam of light can shine through. Gradually, by purity and unselfishness, we can make the obscuring medium less and less dense, until at last it becomes as transparent as glass. Sri Ramakrishna was like the iron cask transformed into a glass cask, through which can be seen the inner light as it is.[7]

The cask of glass.

You cannot teach a child any more than you

can grow a plant. The plant develops its own nature.[8] The child also teaches itself. But you can help it to go forward in its own way. What you can do is not of a positive nature but negative. You can take away the obstacles, and knowledge comes out of its own naure. Loosen the soil a little, so that it may come out easily. Put a hedge round it ; see that it is not killed by anything.[9] You can supply the growing seed with the materials for the making up of its body, bringing to it the earth, the water, the air that it wants. And there your work stops. It will take all that it wants by its own nature.[10] So with the education of the child. A child educates itself.[11] The teacher spoils everything by thinking that he is teaching. Within man is all knowledge, and it requires only an awakening, and that much is the work of the teacher. We have only to do so much for the boys that they may learn to apply their own intellect to the proper use of their hands, legs, ears and eyes.[12]

Self-education.

That system which aims at educating our boys in the same manner as that of the man who battered his ass, being advised that it could thereby be turned into a horse, should be abolished.[13] Owing to undue domination exercised by the parents, our boys

Free growth.

do not get free scope for growth. In every one there are infinite tendencies which require proper scope for satisfaction.[14] Violent attempts at reform always end by retarding reform. If you do not allow one to become a lion, one will become a fox.[15]

Positive ideas.

We should give positive ideas. Negative thoughts only weaken men. Do you not find that where parents are constantly taxing their sons to read and write, telling them that they will never learn anything and calling them fools and so forth, the latter do actually turn out to be so in many cases? If you speak kind words to them and encourage them, they are bound to improve in time. If you can give them positive ideas, people will grow up to be men and learn to stand on their own legs. In language and literature, in poetry and arts, in everything we must point out not the mistakes that people are making in their thoughts and actions, but the way in which they will be able to do these things better.[16] The teaching must be modified according to the needs of the taught. Past lives have moulded our tendencies, and so give to the pupil according to his tendencies. Take every one where he stands and push him forward.[17] We have seen how Sri Ramakrishna would encourage

even those whom we considered worthless and change the very course of their lives thereby! He never destroyed a single man's special inclinations. He gave words of hope and encouragement even to the most degraded of persons and lifted them up.

Liberty is the first condition of growth. It is wrong, a thousand times wrong, if any of you dares to say, 'I will work out the salvation of this woman or child.' Hands off! They will solve their own problems. Who are you to assume that you know everything? How dare you think that you have the right over God? For, don't you know that every soul is the Soul of God? Look upon every one as God. You can only serve. Serve the children of the Lord if you have the privilege. If the Lord grants that you can help any one of His children, blessed you are. Blessed you are that that privilege was given to you when others had it not. Do it only as worship.[18]

Service as worship.

Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making, assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more educa-

Assimilation of ideas.

tion than any man who has got by heart a whole library. If education were identical with information, the libraries would be the greatest sages in the world and encyclopaedias the Rishis.[19]

Wrong education.

Getting by heart the thoughts of others in a foreign language and stuffing your brain with them and taking some university degrees, you consider yourself educated. Is this education? What is the goal of your education? Either a clerkship, or being a lawyer, or at the most a Deputy Magistrate, which is another form of clerkship — isn't that all? What good will it do you or the country at large? Open your eyes and see what a piteous cry for food is rising in the land of Bharata, proverbial for its food. Will your education fulfil this want?[20] The education that does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy and the courage of a lion — is it worth the name?[21]

The needed education.

We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet.[22] What we need is to study, independent of foreign control, different branches of

the knowledge that is our own, and with it the English language and western science; we need technical education and all else that will develop industries, so that men instead of seeking for service may earn enough to provide for themselves and save against a rainy day.[23]

The end of all education, all training, should be man-making. The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow.[24] The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful, is called education.[25] What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and secrets of the universe and will accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean, meeting death face to face.[26] It is man-making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want.[27]

The goal of man-making.

II

THE ONLY METHOD OF EDUCATION

There is only one method by which to attain knowledge, that which is called concentration.[1]

Concentration

The very essence of education is concentration of mind.[2] From the lowest man to the highest *yogi*, all have to use the same method to attain knowledge. The chemist who works in his laboratory concentrates all the powers of his mind, brings them into one focus, and throws them on the elements; the elements stand analysed, and thus his knowledge comes. The astronomer concentrates the powers of his mind and brings them into one focus; and he throws them on to objects through his telescope; and stars and systems roll forward and give up their secrets to him. So it is in every case: with the professor in his chair, the student with his book, with every man who is working to know.[3]

Its power

The more the power of concentration, the greater the knowledge that is acquired. Even the lowest shoeblack, if he gives more concentration, will black shoes better. The cook with concentration will cook a meal all the better. In making money, or in wor-

shipping God, or in doing anything, the stronger the power of concentration, the better will that thing be done. This is the one call, the one knock, which opens the gates of Nature, and lets out floods of light.[4]

Difference in degree.

Ninety per cent of thought-force is wasted by the ordinary human being and therefore he is constantly committing blunders. The trained man or mind never makes a mistake.[5] The main difference between men and the animals is the difference in their power of concentration. An animal has very little power of concentration. Those who have trained animals find much difficulty in the fact that the animal is constantly forgetting what is told him. He cannot concentrate his mind upon anything for a long time. Herein is the difference between man and the animals. This difference in their power of concentration also constitutes the difference between man and man. Compare the lowest with the highest man. The difference is in the degree of concentration.[6]

Results.

All success in any line of work is the result of this. High achievements in arts, music, etc., are the result of concentration.[7] When the mind is concentrated and turned back on itself, all within us will be our servants,

not our masters. The Greeks applied their concentration to the exernal world and the result was perfection in art, literature etc. The Hindu concentrated on the internal world, upon the unseen realms in the self and developed the science of yoga.[8] The world is ready to give up its secrets if we only know how to knock, how to give the necessary blow. The strength and force of the blow comes through concentration.[9]

The power of concentration is the only key to the treasure-house of knowledge. In the present state of our body we are much distracted, and the mind is frittering away its energies upon a hundred things. As soon as I try to call on my thoughts and concentrate my mind upon any one object of knowledge, thousands of undesired impulses rush into the brain, thousands of thoughts rush into the mind and disturb it. How to check it and bring the mind under control is the whole subject of study in Rajayoga.[10] The practice of meditation leads to mental concentration.[11]

Only key to knowledge

To me the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collection of facts. If I had to do my education once again, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment, and then with a

perfect instrument, collect facts at will.[12]

Power comes to him who observes unbroken Brahmacharya for a period of twelve years.[13] Complete continence gives great intellectual and spiritual power.[14] Controlled desire leads to the highest results. Transform the sexual energy into spiritual energy. The stronger this force, the more can be done with it. Only a powerful current of water can do hydraulic mining.[15] It is owing to want of continence that everything is on the brink of ruin in our country. By observance of strict Brahmacharya all learning can be mastered in a very short time ; one acquires an unfailing memory of what one hears or knows but once.[16] The chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will power. Without chastity there can be no spiritual strength. Continence gives wonderful control over mankind. The spiritual leaders of men have been very continent and this is what gave them power.[17]

Brahmacharya necessary for concentration.

Every boy should be trained to practise absolute Brahmacharya and then, and then alone faith and Shraddha will come.[18] Chastity in thought, word and deed always and in all conditions is what is called Brahmacharya.[19] Unchaste imagination is as bad as unchaste action.[20] The Brahmacharin

must be pure in thought, word and deed.[21]

The idea of true Shraddha must be brought back once more to us. The faith in our own selves must be reawakened and then only all the problems which face our country will gradually be solved by ourselves.[22] What we want is this Shraddha. What makes the difference between man and man is the difference in the Shraddha and nothing else. What makes one man great and another weak and low is this Shraddha. My master used to say: he who thinks himself weak will become weak; and that is true. This Shraddha must enter into you. Whatever of material power you see manifested by the western races, is the outcome of this Shraddha, because they believe in their muscles; and if you believe in the spirit how much more will it work![23]

Shraddha, basis of all growth

I beg you to understand this one fact, no good comes out of the man who day and night thinks he is nobody. If a man day and night thinks that he is miserable, low and nothing, nothing he becomes. If you say 'I am, I am', so shall you be. That is the great fact you ought to remember. We are children of the Almighty, we are sparks of the infinite, divine fire. How can we be nothings? We are everything, ready to do everything; we can do

One becomes what one thinks

everything. This faith in themselves was in the heart of our ancestors; this faith in themselves was the motive power that pushed them forward in the march of civilization. If there has been degeneration, if there has been defect, you will find that degeneration to have started on the day our people lost this faith in themselves.[24]

To preach the doctrine of Shraddha or genuine faith is the mission of my life. Let me repeat to you that this faith is one of the most potent factors of humanity. First have faith in yourselves. Know that though one may be a little bubble and another may be a mountain-high wave, yet behind both the bubble and the wave there is the infinite ocean.[25] The infinite ocean is the background of me as well as you. Mine also is that infinite ocean of life, of power, of spirituality as well as yours. Therefore, my brethren, teach this life-saving, great, ennobling, grand doctrine to your children even from their very birth.[26]

III

EDUCATION FOR CHARACTER

The character of any man is but the aggregate of his tendencies, the sum total of the bent of his mind. As pleasure and pain pass before his soul, they leave upon it different pictures, and the result of these combined impressions is what is called a man's character.[1] We are what our thoughts have made us.[2] Each thought is a little hammer blow on the lump of iron which our bodies are, manufacturing out of it what we want it to be.[3] Words are secondary. Thoughts live; they travel far. And so take care of what you think.

Value of thought-force.

Good and evil have an equal share in moulding character and in some cases misery is a greater teacher than happiness. In studying the great characters the world has produced, I dare say, in the vast majority of cases, it would be found that it was misery that taught more than happiness, it was poverty that taught more than wealth, and

The role of pleasure and pain.

it was blows that brought out their inner fire more than praise.[4] Brought up in the lap of luxury, lying on a bed of roses and never shedding a tear, who has become great ? When there comes affection in the heart, when the storm of sorrow blows all round, and it seems as if light will be seen no more, when hope and courage are almost gone, it is then, in the midst of this great spiritual tempest, that the light within gleams.[5]

Result of action.

Using the simile of a lake for the mind, every ripple, every wave that rises in the mind, when it subsides, does not die out entirely, but leaves a mark and a future possibility of that mark coming out again. Every work that we do, every movement of the body, every thought that we think, leaves such an impression on the mind-stuff, and even when such impressions are not obvious on the surface, they are sufficiently strong to work beneath the surface, subconsciously. What we are every moment is determined by the sum total of these impressions on the mind. Each man's character is determined by the sum total of these impressions. If good impressions prevail, the character becomes good, if bad, it becomes bad. If a man continuously hears bad words, thinks bad thoughts, does bad actions, his mind will be full of bad impressions ;

and they will influence his thought and work without his being conscious of the fact. In fact, these bad impressions are always working. The sum total of these impressions in him will create the strong motive power for doing bad actions. He will be like a machine in the hands of his impressions.[6]

Similarly if a man thinks good thoughts and does good works, the sum total of these impressions will be good and they in a similar manner will force him to do good in spite of himself. When a man has done so much good work and thought so many good thoughts, there is an irresistible tendency in him to do good. Even if he wishes to do evil, his mind, as the sum total of his tendencies, will not allow him to do so. He is completely under the influence of the good tendencies. When such is the case, a man's good character is said to be established.[6] If you really want to judge the character of a man, look not at his great performances. Watch a man do his most common actions. Those are indeed the things which will tell you the real character of the great man. Great occasions rouse even the lowest of human beings to some kind of greatness, but he alone is really great whose character is great always —the same wherever he be.[7]

Formation of character.

When a large number of these impressions is left on the mind, they coalesce and become a habit. It is said, 'Habit is second nature. It is first nature also and the whole nature of man.* Everything that we are is the result of habit. That gives us consolation because, if it is only habit, we can make it and unmake it at any time. The only remedy for bad habits is counter habits. All the bad habits can be controlled by good habits. Go on doing good, thinking holy thoughts continuously. That is the only way to suppress base impressions. Never say any man is hopeless, because he only represents a character, a bundle of habits, which can be checked by new and better ones. Character is repeated habits and repeated habits alone can reform character.*

Habits, good and bad.

The cause of all apparent evil is in ourselves. Do not blame any supernatural being. Neither be hopeless or despondent, nor think that we are in a place from which we can never escape unless someone comes and gives a helping hand. We are like silkworms. We make the thread ou of our own sub-

We mould our destinies.

* This is based on the Doctrine of Karma and Rebirth by which even at birth, the start of character is founded on previous habit, *viz.*, that of a previous life.

stance and spin the cocoon, and in course of time are imprisoned inside. This network of karma we have woven around ourselves. And in our ignorance we feel as if we are bound, and weep and wail for help. But help does not come from without; it comes from within ourselves. Cry to all the Gods of the universe. I cried for years and in the end I found that I was helped. But help came from within. And I had to undo what I had done by mistake. I had to cut the net which I had thrown round myself. I have committed many mistakes in my life. But mark you, without those mistakes, I should not be what I am to-day. I do not mean that you are to go home and wilfully commit mistakes; do not misunderstand me in that way. But do not mope because of the mistakes you have committed."

Mistakes due to ignorance.

We commit mistakes because we are weak, and we are weak because we are ignorant. Who makes us ignorant? We ourselves. We put our hands over our eyes and weep that it is dark. Take the hands away and there is light. The light exists always for us, the self-effulgent nature of the human soul. Do you not hear what modern scientific men say? What is the cause of evolution? Desire. The animal wants to do something but does not find the environment favourable, and therefore develops a

new body. Who develops it? The animal itself: its will. Continue to exercise your will and it will take you higher. The will is almighty. If it is almighty, you may say: why cannot I do everything? But you are thinking only of your little self. Look back on yourself from the state of the amoeba to the human being; who made all that? Your own will. Can you deny that it is almighty? That which has made you come up so high, can make you go higher still. What you want is character, strengthening of the will.[10]

Build up your character.

If you go home and sit in sack-cloth and ashes, and weep your lives out because you took certain false steps, it will not help you, but will weaken you all the more. If this room is full of darkness for thousands of years and you come in and begin to weep and wail, will the darkness vanish? Strike a match and light comes in a moment. What good will it do to you to think all your lives, 'Oh, I have done evil; I have made many mistakes.'? It requires no ghost to tell us that. Bring in the light and evil goes in a moment. Build up your character and manifest your real nature, the Effulgent, the Resplendent, the Ever-Pure and call it up in every one you see.[11]

IV

DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY

Personal magnetism.

You see what is happening all around us. The world is one of influence. Part of our energy is used up in the preservation of our own bodies. Beyond that, every particle of our energy is day and night being used in influencing others. Our bodies, our virtues, our intellect, and our spirituality, all these are continuously influencing others ; and so, conversely, we are being influenced by them. This is going on all around us. Now, to take a concrete example : a man comes, you know he is very learned, his language is beautiful and he speaks to you by the hour — but he does not make any impression. Another man comes, and he speaks a few words, not well arranged, ungrammatical perhaps ; all the same, he makes an immense impression. Many of you have seen that. So it is evident that words alone cannot always produce an impression. Words, even thoughts, contribute only one-third of the influence in making an impression, the man, two-thirds. What you call the personal magnetism of the man — that is what goes out and impresses you.

Coming to great leaders of mankind, we always find that it was the personality of the man that counted. Now, take all the great authors of the past, the great thinkers. Really speaking, how many thoughts have they thought? Take all the writings that have been left to us by the past leaders of mankind; take each one of their books and appraise them. The real thoughts, new and genuine, that have been thought in this world up to this time, amount to only a handful. Read in their books the thoughts they have left to us. The authors do not appear to be giants to us, and yet we know that they were great giants in their days. What made them so? Not simply the thoughts they thought, neither the books they wrote, nor the speeches they made, it was something else that is now gone, that is their personality. As I have already remarked, the personality of the man is two-thirds, and his intellect, his words, are but one-third. It is the real man, the personality of the man, that runs through us. Our actions are but effects. Actions must come when the man is there; the effect is bound to follow the cause.

The great leaders.

The ideal of all education, all training, should be this man-making. But, instead of that, we are always trying to polish up the outside. What use

in polishing up the outside when there is no inside? The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The man who influences, who throws his magic, as it were, upon his fellow-beings, is a dynamo of power, and when that man is ready, he can do anything and everything he likes: that personality put upon anything will make it work.

Now we see that though this is a fact, no physical laws that we know of will explain this. How can we explain it by chemical and physical knowledge? How much of oxygen, hydrogen, carbon — how many molecules in different positions, and how many cells, etc., etc., can explain this mysterious personality? And we still see, it is a fact, and not only that, it is the real man; and it is that man that lives and moves and works, it is that man that influences, moves his fellow-beings and passes out, and his intellect and books and works are but traces left behind. Think of this. Compare the great teachers of religion with the great philosophers. The philosophers scarcely influenced anybody's inner man, and yet they wrote most marvellous books. The religious teachers, on the other hand, moved countries in their lifetime. The difference was made by personality. In the philosopher it is a faint personality that

influences; in the great Prophets it is tremendous. In the former we touch the intellect, in the latter we touch life. In the one case, it is simply a chemical process, putting certain chemical ingredients together which may gradually combine and under proper circumstances bring out a flash of light or may fail. In the other, it is like a torch that goes round quickly, lighting others.

Science of Yoga.

The science of Yoga claims that it has discovered the laws which develop this personality, and by proper attention to those laws and methods, each one can grow and strengthen his personality. This is one of the great practical things and this is the secret of all education. This has a universal application. In the life of the householder, in the life of the poor, the rich, the man of business, the spiritual man, in every one's life, it is a great thing, the strengthening of this personality. They are laws, very fine, which are behind the physical laws, as we know. That is to say, there are no such realities as a physical world, a mental world, a spiritual world. Whatever is, is one. Let us say, it is a sort of tapering existence, the thickest part is here, it tapers and becomes finer and finer; the finest is what we call

spirit; the grossest, the body. And just as it is here, in the microcosm, it is exactly the same in the macrocosm. This universe of ours is exactly like that; it is the gross external thickness, and it tapers into something finer and finer until it becomes God.

Power in the fine.

We also know that the greatest power is lodged in the fine, not in the coarse. We see a man take up a huge weight, we see his muscles swell, and all over his body we see signs of exertion, and we think the muscles are powerful things. But it is the thin thread-like things, the nerves, which bring power to the muscles; the moment one of these threads is cut off from reaching the muscles, they are not able to work at all. These tiny nerves bring the power from something finer still — thought, and so on. So, it is the fine that is really the seat of power. Of course we can see the movements in the gross; but when fine movements take place, we cannot see them. When a gross thing moves, we catch it, and thus we naturally identify movement with things which are gross. But all the power is really in the fine. We do not see any movement in the fine, perhaps because the movement is so intense that we cannot perceive it. But if by any science, any investigation, we are helped to get hold of

these finer forces which are the cause of the expression, the expression itself will be under control. There is a little bubble coming from the bottom of a lake; we do not see it coming all the time, we see it only when it bursts on the surface; so, we can perceive thoughts only after they develop a great deal, or after they become actions. We constantly complain that we have no control over our actions, over our thoughts. But how can we have it? If we can get control over the fine movements, if we can get hold of thought at the root, before it has become thought, before it has become action, then it would be possible for us to control the whole. Now, if there is a method by which we can analyse, investigate, understand and finally grapple with those finer powers, the finer causes, then alone is it possible to have control over ourselves, and the man who has control over his own mind assuredly will have control over every other mind. That is why purity and morality have been always the object of religion; a pure, moral man has control of himself. And all minds are the same, different parts of one Mind. He who knows one lump of clay has known all the clay in the universe. He who knows and controls his own mind knows the secret of every mind and has power over every mind.

Each man in his childhood runs through the stages through which his race has come up; only the race took thousands of years to do it, while the child takes a few years. The child is first the old savage man — and he crushes a butterfly under his feet. The child is at first like the primitive ancestors of his race. As he grows, he passes through different stages until he reaches the development of his race. Only he does it swiftly and quickly. Now, take the whole of humanity as a race, or take the whole of the animal creation, man and the lower animals, as one whole. There is an end towards which the whole is moving. Let us call it perfection. Some men and women are born who anticipate the whole progress of mankind. Instead of waiting and being reborn over and over again for ages until the whole human race has attained to that perfection, they, as it were, rush through them in a few short years of their life. And we know that we can hasten these processes, if we be true to ourselves. If a number of men, without any culture, be left to live upon an island, and are given barely enough food, clothing and shelter, they will gradually go on and on, evolving higher and higher stages of civilisation. We know also, that this growth can be hastened by additional means. We help the growth of trees, do

Quickening our growth.

we not ? Left to nature they would have grown, only they would have taken a longer time ; we help them to grow in a shorter time than they would otherwise have taken. We are doing all the time the same thing, hastening the growth of things by artificial means. Why cannot we hasten the growth of man ? We can do that as a race. Why are teachers sent to other countries ? Because by these means we can hasten the growth of races. Now, can we not hasten the growth of individuals ? We can. Can we put a limit to the hastening ? We cannot say how much a man can grow in one life. You have no reason to say that this much a man can do and no more. Circumstances can hasten him wonderfully. Can there be any limit then, till you come to perfection ? So, what comes of it ? That a perfect man, that is to say, the type that is to come of this race, perhaps millions of years hence, that man, can come today.

Incarnations and Prophets.

All great Incarnations and Prophets are such men ; they reached perfection in this one life. We have had such men at all periods of the world's history and at all times. Quite recently there was such a man who lived the life of the whole human race and reached the end — even in this life. Even this hastening of the growth must be under

laws. Suppose we can investigate these laws and understand their secrets and apply them to our own needs; it follows that we grow. We hasten our growth, we hasten our development, and we become perfect, even in this life. This is the higher part of our life, and the science of the study of mind and its powers has this perfection as its real end.

The utility of this science is to bring out the perfect man, and not let him wait and wait for ages, just a plaything in the hands of the physical world, like a log of drift-wood carried from wave to wave and tossing about in the ocean. This science wants you to be strong, to take the work in your own hand, instead of leaving it in the hands of nature, and get beyond this little life.[1]

V

THE TEACHER AND THE TAUGHT

My idea of education is Gurugriha-vasa. Without the personal life of the teacher, there would be no education.[1] One should live from his very boyhood with one whose character is a blazing fire and should have before him a living example of the highest teaching. In our country the imparting of knowledge has always been through men of renunciation. The charge of imparting knowledge should again fall upon the shoulders of Tyagis.[2]

Tyagis as teachers.

The old system of education in India was very different from the modern system. The students had not to pay. It was thought that knowledge is so sacred that no man ought to sell it. Knowledge should be given freely and without any price. The teachers used to take students without charge and not only so, most of them gave their students food and clothes. To support these teachers, the wealthy families made gifts to them and they in their turn had to maintain their students.[3] The disciple of old used to repair to the hermitage of the Guru, fuel in hand, and the

Ancient system of education.

Guru, after ascertaining his competence, would teach him the Vedas, fastening round his waist the threefold filament of Munja, a kind of grass as the emblem of his vow to keep his body, mind and speech in control.[4]

There are certain conditions necessary in the taught and also in the teacher.[5] The conditions necessary for the taught are purity, a real thirst after knowledge, and perseverance. Purity in thought, speech and act is absolutely necessary. As for thirst after knowledge, it is an old law that we all get whatever we want. None of us can get anything other than what we fix our hearts upon. There must be a continuous struggle, a constant fight, an unremitting grappling with our lower nature, till the higher want is actually felt and victory is achieved. The student who sets out with such a spirit of perseverance will surely find success at last.[6]

The qualities of the taught.

In regard to the teacher, we must see that he knows the spirit of the scriptures. The whole world reads Bibles, Vedas and Korans; but they are all only words, syntax, etymology, philology — the dry bones of religion. The teacher who deals too much in words and allows the mind to be carried away by the force

The teacher: his qualifications.

of word loses the spirit. It is the knowledge of the spirit of the scriptures alone that constitutes the true teacher.[6] The second condition necessary for the teacher is sinlessness. The question is often asked : 'Why should we look into the character and personality of a teacher ?' This is not right. The *sine qua non* of acquiring truth for oneself, or for imparting to others, is purity of heart and soul. He must be perfectly pure and then only comes the value of his words.[7] The function of the teacher is indeed an affair of the transference of something and not one of mere stimulation of existing intellectual or other faculties in the taught. Something real and appreciable as an influence comes from the teacher and goes to the taught. Therefore, the teacher must be pure. The third condition is in regard to the motive. The teacher must not teach with any ulterior selfish motive, for money, name or fame. His work must be simply out of love, out of pure love for mankind at large. The only medium through which spiritual force can be transmitted is love. Any selfish motive, such as the desire for gain or name, will immediately destroy the conveying medium.[8]

It is not easy to be a disciple. The first condition is that the student who wants to know the truth must give up all desires for gain. What we see is

not truth as long as any desire creeps into our minds. So long as there is in the heart the least desire for the world, truth will not come. The rich understand truth much less than the poor people. The rich man has no time to think of anything beyond his wealth and power, his comforts and indulgences. I do not trust the man who never weeps ; he has a big block of granite where his heart should be. Therefore knowing what prosperity means and what happiness means, one should give up these and seek to know the truth and truth alone. Unselfishness is more paying, only people have not the patience to practise it. It is more paying from the point of view of health also. Love, truth and unselfishness are not merely moral figures of speech, but they form our highest ideal, because in them lies such a manifestation of power. Self-restraint is a manifestation of greater power than all outgoing action. All outgoing energy following a selfish motive is frittered away ; it will not cause power to return to you ; but if restrained, it will result in development of power. This self-control will tend to produce a mighty will, a character which makes a Christ or a Buddha.

The second condition is that a disciple must be able to control the internal and external senses. By hard practice he has to arrive at the stage where he

can assert his mind against the commands of nature. He should be able to say to his mind, "You are mine; I order you, do not see or hear anything." Next the mind must be made to quiet down. It is rushing about. Just as I sit down to meditate, all the vilest subjects in the world come up. The whole thing is nauseating. Why should the mind think thoughts I do not want it to think? I am as it were a slave to the mind. No spiritual knowledge is possible so long as the mind is restless and out of control. The disciple has to learn to control the mind.

Also, the disciple must have great power of endurance. Life seems comfortable, and you find the mind behaves well when everything is going well with you. But if something goes wrong, your mind loses its balance. That is not good. Bear all evil and misery without one murmur or hurt, without one thought of unhappiness, resistance, remedy or retaliation. That is true endurance. When my Master, Sri Ramakrishna, fell ill, a Brahmin suggested to him that he apply his tremendous mental power to cure himself; he said that if my Master would only concentrate his mind on the diseased part of the body, it would heal. Sri Ramakrishna answered, "What! Bring down the mind that I've given to God to this little body!" He

refused to think of body and illness. His mind was continually conscious of God; it was dedicated to Him utterly. He would not use it for any other purpose. Remember also the man on the cross! He pitied those who crucified him. He endured every humiliation and suffering. He took the burden of all upon himself: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Such is true endurance. How very high he was above this life, so high that we cannot understand it!

The next condition the disciple must fulfil is to conceive an extreme desire to be free. No one is desiring anything beyond the body. What is the world but a combination of stomach and sex? Look at millions of men and women — that is what they are living for. Take these away from them and they will find their life empty, meaningless and intolerable. Such are we. And such is our mind; it is continually hankering for ways and means to satisfy the hunger of the stomach and sex. These desires of the body bring only momentary satisfaction and endless suffering. It is like drinking a cup of which the surface layer is nectar, while underneath all is poison. But we still hanker for all these things. Renunciation of the senses and desires is the only way out of this misery. If you want to be

spiritual, you must renounce. This is the real test. Give up the world — this nonsense of the senses. There is only one real desire : to know what is true, to be spiritual. No more materialism, no more this egoism. I must become spiritual. Strong, intense must be the desire. If a man's hands and feet were so tied that he could not move and then if a burning piece of charcoal were placed on his body, he would struggle with all his power to throw it off. When I shall have that sort of extreme desire, that restless struggle to throw off this burning world, then the time will have come for me to glimpse the Divine truth.

Our sole concern should be to know the highest truth. Our goal is the loftiest. Let us worship the spirit in spirit, standing on spirit. Let the foundation be spirit ; the middle, spirit ; the culmination, spirit. Stand thou in the spirit ! That is the goal. We know we cannot reach it yet. Never mind. Do not despair, but do not drag the ideal down. The important thing is : how much less you think of the body, of yourself as matter, as dead, dull insentient matter ; how much more you think of yourself as shining immortal being. The more you think of yourself as shining immortal spirit, the more eager you will be to be absolutely free of matter, body and senses. This is the intense desire to be free.

These are the conditions which a man who wants to be a disciple must fulfil ; without fulfilling them he will not be able to come in contact with the true Guru. And even if he is fortunate enough to find him, he will not be quickened by the power that the Guru may transmit. There cannot be any compromising of these conditions. With the fulfilment of these conditions the lotus of the disciple's heart will open and the bee shall come. Then the disciple knows that the Guru was within himself. He opens out. He realises. He crosses the ocean of life goes beyond, and in mercy, without a thought of gain or praise, he in his turn helps others to cross.[9]

Faith in the teacher.

With the teacher our relationship is the same as that between an ancestor and his descendant. Without faith, humility, submission and veneration in our hearts towards the teacher, there cannot be any growth in us. In those countries which have neglected to keep up this kind of relation, the teacher has become a mere lecturer, the teacher expecting his five dollars and the person taught expecting his brain to be filled with the teacher's words and each going his own way after this much is done.[10] But too much faith in personality has a tendency to produce weakness and idolatry. Worship your Guru

4

as God, but do not obey him blindly. Love him all you will, but think for yourself.[11]

The teacher must throw his whole force into the tendency of the taught. Without real sympathy we can never teach well.[12] Do not try to disturb the faith of any man. If you can, give him something better, but do not destroy what he has. The only true teacher is he who can convert himself, as it were, into a thousand persons at a moment's notice. The true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the student, and transfer his soul to the student's soul and see through and understand through his mind. Such a teacher can really teach and none else.[13]

Sympathy for the taught.

VI

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religion is the innermost core of education. I do not mean my own or any one else's opinion about religion.[1] The true eternal principles have to be held before the people. First of all we have to introduce the worship of the great saints. Those great-souled ones who have realised the eternal truths are to be presented before the people as the ideals to be followed — Sri Ramachandra, Sri Krishna, Mahavira, Sri Ramakrishna and others. Keep aside for the present the Vrindavan aspect of Sri Krishna and spread far and wide the worship of Sri Krishna roaring out the Gita with the voice of a lion, and bring into daily use the worship of Shakti — the Divine Mother, the source of all power. We now mostly need the ideal of the hero with the tremendous spirit of Rajas thrilling through his veins from head to foot — the hero who will dare and die to know the truth, the hero whose armour is renuncia-

Worship of saints.

tion, whose sword is wisdom. We now want the spirit of the brave warrior in the battle-field.[2]

Make the character of Mahavira your ideal. At the command of Ramachandra he crossed the ocean! He had no care for life or death. He was a perfect master of the senses and wonderfully sagacious. Build your life on this great ideal of personal service. Through that ideal all the other ideas will gradually manifest themselves in life. Obedience to the Guru without questioning and strict observance of Brahmacharya — this is the secret of success. As on the one hand Hanuman represents the ideal of service, so on the other he represents leonine courage, striking the world with awe. He has not the least hesitation in sacrificing his life for the good of Rama. A supreme indifference to everything except the service of Rama. Only the carrying out of Sri Rama's behest is the one vow of his life. Such whole-hearted devotion is wanted.[3]

Ideal of service.

At the present time the worship of the divine play of Sri Krishna with the Gopis is not good. Playing on the flute and so on will not regenerate the country.[4] Playing on the khol and kartal and dancing in the frenzy of the kirtana has degenerated the

Raise deep and martial notes.

whole people. In trying to imitate the highest sadhana, the preliminary qualification for which is absolute purity, they have been swallowed in dire tamas. Are not drums made in the country ? Are not trumpets and kettle-drums available in India ? Make the boys hear the deep-toned sound of these instruments. Hearing from boyhood the sound of effeminate forms of music, the country is well-nigh converted into a country of women. The Damaru and horn have to be sounded, drums are to be beaten so as to raise the deep and martial notes, and with 'Mahavira, Mahavira' on our lips and shouting 'Hara, Hara, Vyom, Vyom', the quarters are to be reverberated. The music which awakens only the softer feelings of man is to be stopped now for some time. The people are to be accustomed to hear the Dhrupad music.[5]

Through the thunder roll of the dignified Vedic hymns life is to be brought back into the country. In everything the austere spirit of heroic manhood should be revived. If you can build your character after such an ideal then a thousand others will follow. But take care that you do not swerve an inch from the ideal. Never lose heart. In eating, dressing or lying, in singing or playing, in enjoyment or disease, always manifest the highest moral courage.[6] Never allow weakness to overtake your

mind. Remember Mahavira, remember the Divine Mother, and you will see that all weakness, all cowardice will vanish at once.[7]

The new religion.

The old religions said that he was an atheist who did not believe in God. The new religion says that he is the atheist who does not believe in himself. But it is not selfish faith. It means faith in all because you are all. Love for yourself means love for all, love for animals, love for everything, for you are all one. It is the great faith which will make the world better. The ideal of faith in ourselves is of the greatest help to us. If faith in ourselves had been more extensively taught and practised, I am sure a very large portion of the evils and miseries that we have would have vanished. Throughout the history of mankind if any motive power has been more potent than another in the lives of great men and women, it is that faith in themselves. Born with the consciousness that they were to be great, they became great.[8]

Strength.

Infinite strength is religion.[9] Strength is goodness, weakness is sin.[10] All sins and all evil can be summed up in that one word : weakness. It is weakness that is the motive power in all evil doing. It is weakness

that is the source of all selfishness. It is weakness that makes man injure others. Let them all know what they are, let them repeat day and night what they are: 'So'ham'. Let them suck it in with their mother's milk, this idea of strength — I am He! This is to be first heard; and then let them think of it; and out of that thought will proceed works such as the world has never seen.[11]

Tell the truth boldly.[12] All truth is eternal. Truth is the nature of all souls.[13] And here is the test of truth: anything that makes you weak physically, intellectually and spiritually, reject as poison. There is no life in it, it cannot be true. Truth is strengthening. Truth is purity, truth is all knowledge. Truth must be strengthening, must be enlightening, must be invigorating.[14] Go back to your Upanishads, the shining, the strengthening, the bright philosophy. Take up this philosophy. The greatest truths are the simplest things in the world, simple as your own existence. The truths of the Upanishads are before you. Take them up, live up to them and the salvation of India will be at hand.[15]

Physical weakness is the cause of at least one-third of our miseries. We are lazy; we cannot combine.[16] We speak of many things parrot-like

but never do them. Speaking and not doing has become a habit with us. What is the cause? Physical weakness. This sort of weak brain is not able to do anything. We must strengthen it. First of all our young men must be strong. Religion will come afterwards. Be strong, my young friends, that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to Heaven through football than through the study of the Gita. You will understand Gita better with your biceps, your muscles, a little stronger. You will understand the mighty genius and the mighty strength of Krishna better with a little strong blood in you. You will understand the Upanishads better and the glory of the Atman, when your body stands firm on your feet and you feel yourselves as men.[17]

Fearlessness.

Strength, strength is what the Upanishads speak to me from every page. It is the only literature in the world, where you find the word 'Abhih', 'Fearless', used again and again. In no other scripture in the world is this adjective applied either to God or man. And in my mind rises from the past the vision of the great emperor of the West, Alexander the Great, and I see as it were in a picture the great monarch standing on the banks of the Indus, talking to one of our sannyasins in the forest: the old man he was

talking to, perhaps naked, stark naked, sitting upon a block of stone, and the Emperor astonished at his wisdom tempting him with gold and honour, to come over to Greece. And this man smiles at his gold and smiles at his temptations, and refuses. And then the Emperor standing in his authority as Emperor says, 'I will kill you if you do not come', and the man bursts into a laugh, and says, 'You never told such a falsehood in your life as you tell just now. Who can kill me? For I am spirit unborn and undecaying.' That is strength![18]

Upanishads, the mine of strength.

There are thousands to weaken us, and of stories we have had enough. Therefore, my friends, as one of your blood, as one that lives and dies with you, let me tell you that we want strength, strength, every time strength. And the Upanishads are the great mine of strength. Therein lies strength enough to invigorate the whole world. The whole world can be vivified, made strong, energised through them. They will call with trumpet voice upon the weak, the miserable and the down-trodden of all races, all creeds and all sects to stand on their feet and be free. Freedom, physical freedom, mental freedom and spiritual freedom are the watchwords of the Upanishads.[19]

But no scriptures can make us religious. We may study all the books that are in the world, yet we may not understand a word of religion or of God.[20] We may talk and reason all our lives, but we shall not understand a word of truth until we experience it ourselves. You cannot hope to make a man a surgeon by simply giving him a few books. You cannot satisfy my curiosity to see a country by showing me a map. Maps can only create curiosity in us to get more perfect knowledge. Beyond that they have no value whatever.[21] Temples and churches, books and forms are simply the kindergarten of religion, to make the spiritual child strong enough to take the higher steps. Religion is not in doctrines or dogmas, nor in intellectual argumentation. It is being and becoming. It is realisation.[22]

Religion is realisation.

We may be the most intellectual people the world ever saw and yet we may not come to God at all. On the other hand, irreligious men have been produced from the most intellectual training. It is one of the evils of western civilization — intellectual education alone without taking care of the heart. It only makes men ten times more selfish. When there is conflict between the heart and the brain, let the heart be followed. It is the heart which takes

Cultivate the heart.

one to the highest plane, which intellect can never reach. It goes beyond the intellect and reaches what is called inspiration.[23] Always cultivate the heart. Through the heart the Lord speaks.[24]

The intensest love that humanity has ever known has come from religion. The noblest words of peace that the world has ever heard have come from men of the religious plane. At the same time the bitterest denunciation that the world has ever known has been uttered by religious men.[25] Each religion brings out its own doctrines and insists upon them as being the only true ones. Some will even draw the sword to compel others to believe as they do. This is not through wickedness, but through a particular disease of the human mind called fanaticism.[26] Yet out of this strife and struggle, this hatred and jealousy of religions and sects, there have risen from time to time potent voices proclaiming peace and harmony.[27]

The time was ripe for one to be born who would see in every sect the same spirit working : the same God : one who would see God in every being, one whose heart would weep for the poor, for the weak, for the down-trodden, and at the same time whose grand brilliant intellect would harmonise all conflicting sects not only in India but also outside India ; and

Sri Ramakrishna, the messenger of harmony.

bring a marvellous harmony, the universal religion, into existence. Such a man was born and I had the good fortune to sit at his feet for years.[28] I learned from my Master the wonderful truth that the religions of the world are not contradictory or antagonistic. They are but various phases of one eternal religion.[29] Sri Ramakrishna never spoke a harsh word against anyone. So beautifully tolerant was he that every sect thought that he belonged to it. He loved every one ; to him all religions were true.[30] His whole life was spent in breaking down the barriers of sectarianism and dogma.[31]

Let our watchword then be acceptance and not exclusion. Not only toleration, for so-called toleration is often blasphemy. Toleration means that I think that you are wrong and I am just allowing you to live. Is it not blasphemy to think that you and I are allowing others to live ? I accept all religions that were in the past and worship them all. I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of the Mohammedan ; I shall enter the Christian's church and kneel before the crucifix. I shall enter the Buddhistic temple, where I shall take refuge in Buddha and in his Law. I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the

Not toleration but acceptance.

Hindu, who is trying to see the Light which enlightens the heart of everyone.

Not only shall I do all these but I shall keep my heart open for all that may come in the future. Is God's book finished ? Or is it still a continuous revelation going on ? It is a marvellous book — these spiritual revelations of the world. The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran and all other sacred books are but so many pages, and an infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded. Let us take in all that has been in the past, enjoy the light of the present and open every window of the heart for all that will come in the future. Salutation to all the prophets of the past, to all the great ones of the present and to all that are to come in the future.[32]

VII

THE END AND THE MEANS

One of the greatest lessons I have learned in my life is to pay as much attention to the means of work as to its end. He was a great man from whom I learned it, and his own life was a practical demonstration of this great principle. I have been always learning great lessons from that one principle, and it appears to me that all the secret of success is there: to pay as much attention to the means as to the end.

Means important.

Our great defect in life is that we are so much drawn to the ideal, the goal is so much more enchanting, so much more alluring, so much bigger in our mental horizon, that we lose sight of the details altogether.

But whenever failure comes, if we analyse it critically, in ninety-nine per cent of cases we shall find that it was because we did not pay attention to the means. Proper attention to the finishing, strengthening, of the means, is what we need. With the means all right, the end must come. We forget that it is

Cause of failure.

the cause that produces the effect ; the effect cannot come by itself ; and unless the causes are exact, proper and powerful, the effect will not be produced. Once the ideal is chosen and the means determined, we may almost let go the ideal, because we are sure it will be there, when the means are perfected. When the cause is there, there is no more difficulty about the effect, the effect is bound to come. If we take care of the cause, the effect will take care of itself. The realisation of the ideal is the effect. The means are the cause : attention to the means, therefore, is the great secret of life. We also read this in the Gita and learn that we have to work, constantly work, with all our power ; to put our whole mind in the work, whatever it be, that we are doing. At the same time, we must not be attached. That is to say, we must not be drawn away from the work by anything else, but still we must be able to quit the work whenever we like.

If we examine our own lives, we find that the greatest cause of sorrow is this : we take up something, and put our whole energy on it ; — perhaps it is a failure, and yet we cannot give it up. We know that it is hurting us, that any further clinging to it is simply bringing misery on us ; still, we cannot tear ourselves away from it. The bee came to sip the honey, but its feet stuck to the honey-pot and

it could not get away. Again and again, we are finding ourselves in that state. That is the whole secret of existence. Why are we here? We came here to sip the honey, and we find our hands and feet sticking to it. We are caught, though we came to catch. We came to enjoy; we are being enjoyed. We came to rule; we are being ruled. We came to work; we are being worked. All the time, we find that. And this comes into every detail of our life. We are being worked upon by other minds, and we are always struggling to work on other minds. We want to enjoy the pleasures of life; and they eat into our vitals. We want to get everything from nature, but we find in the long run that nature takes everything from us — depletes us, and casts us aside.

That is the one cause of misery: we are attached, we are being caught. Therefore says the Gita: Work constantly; work, but be not attached; be not caught. Reserve unto yourself the power of detaching yourself from everything, however beloved, however much the soul might yearn for it, however great the pangs of misery you feel if you were going to leave it; still, reserve the power of leaving it whenever you want. The weak have no place here, in this life or in any other life. Weak-

Cause of misery.

ness leads to slavery. Weakness leads to all kinds of misery, physical and mental. Weakness is death. There are hundreds of thousands of microbes surrounding us, but they cannot harm us unless we become weak, until the body is ready and predisposed to receive them. There may be a million microbes of misery, floating about us. Never mind! They dare not approach us, they have no power to get a hold on us, until the mind is weakened. This is the great fact: strength is life, weakness is death. Strength is felicity, life eternal, immortal; weakness is constant strain and misery; weakness is death.

Attachment is the source of all our pleasures now. We are attached to our friends, to our relatives; we are attached to our intellectual and spiritual works; we are attached to external objects, so that we get pleasure from them. What, again, brings misery but this very attachment? We have to detach ourselves to earn joy. If only we had power to detach ourselves at will, there would not be any misery. That man alone will be able to get the best of nature, who, having the power of attaching himself to a thing with all his energy, has also the power to detach himself when he should do so. The difficulty is that there must be as much power of attachment as that of detachment. There

are men who are never attracted by anything. They can never love, they are hard-hearted and apathetic; they escape most of the miseries of life. But the wall never feels misery, the wall never loves, is never hurt; but it is the wall, after all. Surely it is better to be attached and caught, than to be a wall. Therefore the man who never loves, who is hard and stony, escaping most of the miseries of life, escapes also its joys. We do not want that. That is weakness, that is death. That soul has not been weakened that never feels weakness, never feels misery. That is a callous state. We do not want that.

At the same time, we not only want this mighty power of love, this mighty power of attachment, the power of throwing our whole soul upon a single object, losing ourselves and letting ourselves be annihilated, as it were, for other souls — which is the power of the gods — but we want to be higher even than the gods. The perfect man can put his whole soul upon that one point of love, yet he is unattached. How comes this? There is another secret to learn.

The beggar is never happy. The beggar only gets a dole, with pity and scorn behind it, at least with the thought behind that the beggar is a low object. He never really enjoys what he gets.

We are all beggars. Whatever we do, we want a return. We are all traders. We are traders in life, we are traders in virtue, we are traders in religion. Alas! we are also traders in love.

If you come to trade, if it is a question of give-and-take, if it is a question of buy-and-sell, abide by the laws of buying and selling. There is a bad time and there is a good time; there is a rise, and a fall in prices: always you expect the blow to come. It is like looking at the mirror. Your face is reflected: you make a grimace — there is one in the mirror; if you laugh, the mirror laughs. This is buying and selling, giving and taking.

We get caught. How? Not by what we give, but by what we expect. We get misery in return for our love; not from the fact that we love, but from the fact that we want love in return. There is no misery where there is no want. Desire, want, is the father of all misery. Desires are bound by the laws of success and failure. Desires must bring misery.

The great secret of true success, of true happiness, then, is this: the man who asks for no return, the perfectly unselfish man, is the most successful. It seems to be a paradox. Do we not know that every man who is unselfish in life gets cheated, gets

Secret of happiness.

hurt? Apparently, yes. "Christ was unselfish, and yet he was crucified." True, but we know that his unselfishness is the reason, the cause of a great victory, the crowning of millions upon millions of lives with the blessings of true success.

Ask nothing; want nothing in return. Give what you have to give; it will come back to you — but do not think of that now. It will come back multiplied a thousandfold — but the attention must not be on that. Yet have the power to give; give, and there it ends. Learn that the whole of life is giving, that nature will force you to give. So, give willingly. Sooner or later you will have to give up. You come into life to accumulate. With clenched hands, you want to take. But nature puts a hand on your throat and makes your hands open. Whether you will it or not, you have to give. The moment you say, "I will not", the blow comes; you are hurt. None is there but will be compelled, in the long run, to give up everything. And the more one struggles against this law, the more miserable one feels. It is because we dare not give, because we are not resigned enough to accede to this grand demand of nature, that we are miserable. The forest is gone, but we get heat in return. The sun is taking up water from the ocean, to return it in showers. You are a machine for taking and giving;

you take, in order to give. Ask, therefore, nothing in return; but the more you give, the more will come to you. The quicker you can empty the air out of this room, the quicker it will be filled up by the external air; and if you close all the doors and every aperture, that which is within will remain, but that which is outside will never come in, and that which is within will stagnate, degenerate, and become poisoned. A river is continually emptying itself into the ocean and is continually filling up again. Bar not the exit into the ocean. The moment you do that, death seizes you.

Be, therefore, not a beggar; be unattached. This is the most terrible task of life! You do not calculate the dangers on the path. Even by intellectually recognising the difficulties, we really do not know them until we feel them. From a distance we may get a general view of a park: well, what of that? We feel and really know it when we are in it. Even if our every attempt is a failure, and we bleed and are torn asunder, yet, through all this, we have to preserve our heart — we must assert our Godhead in the midst of all these difficulties. Nature wants us to react, to return blow for blow, cheating for cheating, lie for lie, to hit back with

Be unattached.

all our might. Then it requires a super-divine power not to hit back, to keep control, to be unattached.

I know the difficulties. Tremendous they are, and ninety per cent of us become discouraged and lose heart, and in our turn, often become pessimists and cease to believe in sincerity, love, and all that is grand and noble. So, we find men who in the freshness of their lives have been forgiving, kind, simple, and guileless, become in old age, lying masks of men. Their minds are a mass of intricacy. There may be a good deal of external policy, possibly. They are not hot-headed, they do not speak, but it would be better for them to do so ; their hearts are dead and, therefore, they do not speak. They do not curse, nor become angry ; but it would be better for them to be able to be angry, a thousand times better, to be able to curse. They cannot. There is death in the heart, for cold hands have seized upon it, and it can no more act, even to utter a curse, even to use a harsh word.

All this we have to avoid : therefore I say, we require super-divine power. Superhuman power is not strong enough. Super-divine strength is the only way, the one way out. By it alone we can pass through all these intricacies, through these showers of miseries, unscathed. We may be cut to

pieces, torn asunder, yet our hearts must grow nobler and nobler all the time.

It is very difficult, but we can overcome the difficulty by constant practice. We must learn that nothing can happen to us, unless we make ourselves susceptible — I have just said, no disease can come to me until the body is ready; it does not depend alone on the germs, but upon a certain predisposition which is already in the body. We get only that for which we are fitted. Let us give up our pride and understand this, that never is misery undeserved. There never has been a blow undeserved; there never has been an evil for which I did not pave the way with my own hands. We ought to know that. Analyse yourselves and you will find that every blow you have received came to you because you prepared yourselves for it. You did half and the external world did the other half; that is how the blow came. That will sober us down. At the same time, from this very analysis will come a note of hope, and the note of hope is: "I have no control of the external world, but that which is in me and nearer unto me, my own world, is in my control. If the two together are required to make a failure, if the two together are necessary to give me a blow,

Overcome difficulty by practice.

I will not contribute the one which is in my keeping and how then can the blow come? If I get real control of myself, the blow will never come."

We are all the time, from our childhood, trying to lay the blame upon something outside ourselves. We are always standing up to set right other people, and not ourselves. If we are miserable, we say, "Oh, the world is a devil's world." But why should we be in such a world, if we really are so good? If this is a devil's world, we must be devils also, why else, should we be here? "Oh, the people of the world are so selfish!" True enough; but why should we be found in that company, if we be better? Just think of that!

We only get what we deserve. It is a lie when we say, the world is bad and we are good. It can never be so. It is a terrible lie we tell ourselves. This is the first lesson to learn: be determined not to curse anything outside, not to lay the blame upon any one outside, but be a man, stand up, lay the blame on yourself. You will find that is always true. Get hold of yourself.

We get what we deserve.

We are to take care of ourselves — that much we can do — and give up attending to others, for a time. Let us perfect the means; the end will

take care of itself. For the world can be good and pure, only if our lives are good and pure. It is an effect, and we are the means. Therefore, let us purify ourselves. Let us make ourselves perfect.[1]

VIII

EDUCATION OF WOMEN

It is very difficult to understand why in this country so much difference is made between men and women, whereas the Vedanta declares that one and the same Self is present in all beings. Writing down Smritis etc., and binding them by hard rules, the men have turned the women into mere manufacturing machines. In the period of degradation, when the priests made the other castes incompetent to study the Vedas, they deprived the women also of all their rights. You will find in the Vedic and Upanishadic age Maitreyi, Gargi and other ladies of revered memory have taken the place of Rishis. In an assembly of a thousand Brahmanas who were all erudite in the Vedas, Gargi boldly challenged Yajnavalkya in a discussion about Brahman.[1]

In ancient India.

All nations have attained greatness by paying proper respect to women. That country and that nation which do not respect women have never become great, nor will ever be in future.[2] The real Shakti-

Real Shakti worship.

worshipper is he who knows that God is the Omnipresent force in the universe, and sees in women the manifestation of that force. In America men look upon their women in this light and treat their women as well as can be desired, and hence they are so prosperous, so learned, so free and so energetic.[3] The principal reason why our race has so degenerated is that we had no respect for these living images of Shakti. Manu says, 'Where women are respected, there the Gods delight, and where they are not, there all work and efforts come to naught.' There is no hope of rise for that family or country where they live in sadness.[4]

Women have many and grave problems, but none that cannot be solved by that magic word: education.[5] What does our Manu enjoin? 'Daughters should be supported and educated with as much care and attention as the sons.' As sons should be married after observing Brahmacharya up to the thirtieth year, so daughters also should observe Brahmacharya and be educated by their parents. But what are we actually doing?[6] They have all the time been trained in helplessness and servile dependence on others; and so they are good only to weep their eyes out at the approach of

Education will solve women's problems.

the slightest mishap or danger.[7] Women must be put in a position to solve their own problems in their own way. Our Indian women are as capable of doing it as any in the world.[8]

Female education should be spread with religion as its centre. All other training should be secondary to religion. Religious training, the formation of character and observance of the vows of celibacy — these should be attended to.[9] Our Hindu women easily understand what chastity means, because it is their heritage. First of all intensify that ideal within them above everything else, so that they may develop a strong character by the force of which, in every stage of their lives, whether married or single — if they prefer to remain so — they will not be in the least afraid even to give up their lives rather than flinch an inch from their chastity.[10]

Religion, the centre.

The women of India must grow and develop in the footprints of Sita. Sita is unique. She is the very type of the true Indian woman, for all the Indian ideals of a perfected woman have grown out of that one life of Sita. And here she stands these thousands of years, commanding the worship of every man, woman and child throughout the length and breadth of Aryavarta.

Sita, the Ideal.

There she will always be, this glorious Sita, purer than purity itself, all patience, and all suffering. She who suffered that life of suffering without a murmur, she the ever chaste and ever pure wife, she the ideal of the people, our national God she must always remain. She has gone into the very vitals of our race. Any attempt to modernise our women, if it tries to take our women away from that ideal of Sita, is immediately a failure as we see every day.[11]

Studying the present needs of the age, it seems imperative to train some of them up in the ideals of renunciation, so that they will take up the vow of life-long virginity, fired with the strength of that virtue of chastity which is innate in their blood from hoary antiquity. Our motherland requires for her well-being some of her children to become pure-souled Brahmacharins and Brahmacharinis.[12] Even if one amongst the women became a knower of Brahman, then by the radiance of her personality, thousands of women would be inspired and awakened to Truth, and great well-being of the country and society would ensue.[13]

Training in renunciation.

Brahmacharinis of education and character should take up the task of teaching.[14] In villages and towns they must open centres and strive for the

spread of female education. Through such devout preachers of character, there will be the real spread of female education in the country.[15] History and *puranas*, house-keeping and the arts, the duties of home life and the principles that make for the development of character have to be taught.[16] Other matters such as sewing, culinary art, rules of domestic work and upbringing of children will also be taught. Japa, worship and meditation shall form an indispensable part of the teaching.[17] Along with other things they should acquire the spirit of valour and heroism. In the present day it has become necessary for them also to learn self-defence — how grand was the Queen of Jhansi ![18] So shall we bring to the need of India great fearless women — women worthy to continue the traditions of Sanghamitta, Lila, Ahalya Bai, and Mira Bai — women fit to be mothers of heroes, because they are pure and fearless, strong with the strength that comes of touching the feet of God.[19] We must see to their growing up as ideal matrons of home in time. The children of such mothers will make further progress in the virtues that distinguish themselves. It is only in the homes of educated and pious mothers that great men are born.[20]

Secular education.

Self-defence.

If the women are raised, their children will by their noble actions glorify the name of the country ; then will culture, knowledge, power and devotion awaken in the country.[21]

IX

EDUCATION OF THE MASSES

My heart aches to think of the condition of the poor, the low in India. They sink lower and lower every day. They feel the blow showered upon them by a cruel society, but they do not know whence the blow comes. They have forgotten that they too are men.[1] My heart is too full to express my feelings. So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them.[2] Our great national sin is the neglect of the masses and that is the cause of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed and well cared for.[3]

The great national sin.

A nation is advanced in proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses. The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolising of the whole education and intelligence of the land among a handful of men. If we are to rise again, we shall have to do it by spreading education

Mass education, the only solution.

among the masses.[4] The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education to develop their individuality. They are to be given ideas. Their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them, and then they will work out their own salvation. Every nation, every man and every woman must work out their own salvation. Give them ideas — that is the only help they require and then the rest must follow as effect. Ours is to put the chemicals together, the crystallization comes in the law of nature.[5]

My idea is first of all to bring out the gems of spirituality that are stored up in our books and in the possession of a few only, hidden as it were in monasteries and forests — to bring them out; to bring the knowledge out of them, not only from the hands where it is hidden, but from the still more inaccessible chest, the language in which it is preserved, the incrustation of centuries of Sanskrit words. In one word, I want to make them popular. I want to bring out these ideas and let them be the common property of all, of every man in India, whether he knows the Sanskrit language or not. The great difficulty in the way is the Sanskrit language, this glorious language of ours, and this difficulty cannot be removed until, if

Bring the great spiritual truths within the reach of all.

it is possible, the whole of our nation are good Sanskrit scholars. You will understand the difficulty when I tell you that I have been studying this language all my life and yet every new book is new to me. How much more difficult would it then be for people who never had time to study it thoroughly ! Therefore the ideas must be taught in the language of the people.[6] Teach the masses in the vernaculars. Give them ideas ; they will get information, but something more will be necessary. Give them culture. Until you can give them that, there can be no permanence in the raised condition of the masses.[7]

Teach through mother tongue.

At the same time Sanskrit education must go along with it, because the very sound of Sanskrit words gives a prestige, a power and a strength to the race.[8] Even the great Buddha made one false step when he stopped the Sanskrit language from being studied by the masses. He wanted rapid and immediate results ; and translated and preached in the language of the day — Pali. That was grand ; he spoke the language of the people and the people understood him. It spread the ideas quickly and made them reach far and wide. But along with that Sanskrit ought to have been spread. Knowledge

Sanskrit education.

came, but prestige was not there. Until you give them that, there will be another caste created, having the advantage of the Sanskrit language, which will quickly get above the rest.[7]

Remember that the nation lives in the cottage.[9] Your duty at present is to go from one part of the country to another, from village to village, and make the people understand that mere sitting about idly won't do any more. Make them understand their real condition and say, 'O ye Brothers, all arise! awake! How much longer would you remain asleep!' Go and advise them how to improve their own condition and make them comprehend the sublime truths of the *shastras*, by presenting them in a lucid and popular way. Impress upon their minds that they have the same right to religion as the Brahmanas. Initiate, even down to the Chandalas, in these fiery *mantras*. Also instruct them in simple words about the necessities of life, and in trade, commerce, agriculture, etc.[10]

The nation lives in the cottage.

Centuries and centuries, a thousand years of crushing tyranny of castes, kings and foreigners have taken out all their strength. And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe 'I am the Soul', 'Me the sword cannot cut; nor weapons

Spiritualize all walks of life.

pierce; me the fire cannot burn; me the air cannot dry; I am the Omnipotent. I am the Omniscient.'[11] These conceptions of the Vedanta must come out from the forest and the cave, they must come out to work at the bar and the bench, in the pulpit and in the cottage of the poor man, with the fishermen that are catching fish and with the students that are studying. They call to every man, woman and child, whatever their occupation, wherever they may be. How can the fishermen and all these carry out the ideas of the Upanisads? The way has been shown. If the fisherman thinks that he is the spirit, he will be a better fisherman; if a student thinks he is the spirit, he will be a better student.[12]

Education to reach every home.

The one thing that is at the root of all evils in India is the condition of the poor.[13] Suppose you open a free school in every village, still it would do no good, for the poverty in India is such that the poor boys would rather go to help their fathers in the fields or otherwise try to make a living than come to the school. Now if the mountain does not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. If the poor boy cannot come to education, education must go to him. There are thousands of single-minded, self-sacrificing *sannyasins* in our own coun-

try, going from village to village, teaching religion. If some of them can be organised as teachers of secular things also, they will go from place to place, from door to door, not only preaching but teaching also. Suppose two of these men go to a village in the evening with a camera, a globe, some maps etc., they can teach a great deal of astronomy and geography to the ignorant. By telling stories about different nations, they can give the poor a hundred times more information through the ear than they can get in a lifetime through books.[14] Kindle their knowledge with the help of modern science.[15] Teach them History, Geography, Science, Literature and along with these the profound truths of Religion through these.[16]

Engrossed in the struggle for existence, they had not the opportunity for the awakening of knowledge. They have worked so long like machines and the clever educated section have taken the substantial part of the fruits of their labour. But times have changed. The lower classes are gradually awakening to this fact, and making a united front against this. The upper classes will no longer be able to repress the lower, try they ever so much. The well-being of the higher classes now lies in helping the lower to get their legitimate rights. Therefore I say : set yourself to the task of spreading education

among the masses. Tell them and make them understand, 'You are our brothers, a part and parcel of our bodies.' If they receive this sympathy from you, their enthusiasm for work will be increased a hundredfold.[17]

Three things are necessary for great achievements. First, feel from the heart. What is in the intellect or reason? It goes a few steps and there it stops. But through the heart comes inspiration. Love opens the most impossible gates. Feel, therefore, my would-be patriots. Do you feel? Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and of sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving to-day, and millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud? Does it make you restless? Does it make you sleepless? Has it gone into your blood, coursing through your veins, becoming consonant with your heart-beats? Has it made you almost mad? Are you seized with the one idea of the misery of ruin, and have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies? Have you done that? That is the very first step.[18]

Requisites for great achievements: Feeling.

You may feel then; but instead of spending your energies in frothy talk, have you found any way out, any practical solution, to soothe their miseries, to bring them out of this living death? Yet that is not all. Have you got the will to surmount mountain-high obstructions? If the whole world stands against you, sword in hand, would you still dare to do what you think is right? If your wives and children are against you, if all your name dies, your wealth vanishes, would you still stick to it? Would you still pursue it and go on steadily towards your own goal? As the great king Bhartrihari says, 'Let the sages blame or let them praise; let the Goddess of Fortune come or let Her go wherever She likes, let death come to-day or let it come in hundreds of years, he indeed is the steady man who does not move one inch from the way of truth.' Have you got that steadfastness? If you have these three things, each one of you will work miracles.[19]

The solution.

Steadfastness.

Let us pray, 'Lead, kindly Light'; a beam will come through the dark, and a hand will be stretched forth to lead us. Let each one of us pray day and night for the down-trodden millions of India, who are held fast by poverty, priestcraft and tyranny; pray day and night for them. I care more to preach

Work as worship.

to them than to the high and the rich. I am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay, no saint. But I am poor. I love the poor. Who feels for the two hundred millions of men and women sunken for ever in poverty and ignorance? Him I call a *mahatman* who feels for the poor. Who feels for them? They cannot find light or education. Who will bring the light to them — who will travel from door to door bringing education to them? Let these people be your God — think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly — the Lord will show you the way.[20]

X

WHAT IS DUTY

It is necessary to know what duty is. If I have to do something I must first know that it is my duty, and then I can do it. The idea of duty is different in different nations. The Mohammedan says what is written in his book, the Koran, is his duty; the Hindu says what is in the Vedas is his duty; and the Christian says what is in the Bible is his duty. We find that there are varied ideas of duty, differing according to different states in life, different historical periods and different nations. The term "duty", like every other universal abstract term, is impossible to define clearly; we can only get an idea of it by knowing its practical operations and results. When certain things occur before us we have all a natural or trained impulse to act in a certain manner towards them; when this impulse comes, the mind begins to think about the situation. Sometimes it thinks that it is good to act in a particular manner under the given conditions, at other times it thinks that it is wrong to act in the same manner even in the very same circumstances. The ordinary idea of

duty everywhere is that every good man follows the dictates of his conscience.

But what is it that makes an act a duty? If a Christian finds a piece of beef before him and does not eat it to save his own life, or will not give it to save the life of another man, he is sure to feel that he has not done his duty. But if a Hindu dares to eat that piece of beef or to give it to another Hindu, he is equally sure to feel that he too has not done his duty; the Hindu's training and education make him feel that way. Ordinarily if a man goes out into the street and shoots down another man, he is apt to feel sorry for it, thinking that he has done wrong. But if the very same man, as a soldier in his regiment, kills not one but twenty, he is certain to feel glad and think that he has done his duty remarkably well. Therefore we see that it is not the thing done that defines a duty. To give an objective definition of duty is thus entirely impossible. Yet there is duty from the subjective side. Any action that makes us go godward is a good action, and is our duty; any action that makes us go downward is evil, and is not our duty. From the subjective standpoint we may see that certain acts have a tendency to exalt and ennoble us, while certain other acts have a tendency to degrade and to brutalise us. But

According to place in life.

it is not possible to make out with certainty which acts have which kind of tendency in relation to all persons, of all sorts and conditions. There is, however, only one idea of duty which has been universally accepted by all mankind, of all ages and sects and countries; and that has been summed up in a Sanskrit aphorism thus:—"Do not injure any being; not injuring any being is virtue, injuring any being is sin."

The Bhagavad Gita frequently alludes to duties dependent upon birth and position in life. Birth and position in life and in society largely determine the mental and moral attitude of life. It is therefore our duty to do that work which will exalt and ennoble us in accordance with the ideals and activities of the society in which we are born. But it must be particularly remembered that the same ideals and activities do not prevail in all societies and countries; our ignorance of this is the main cause of much of the hatred of one nation towards another. An American thinks that whatever an American does in accordance with the custom of his country is the best thing to do, and that whoever does not follow his custom must be a very wicked man. A Hindu thinks that his customs are the only right ones and are the best in the world, and that whosoever does not obey

The Gita.

them must be the most wicked man living. This is quite a natural mistake which all of us are apt to make. But it is very harmful; it is the cause of half the uncharitableness found in the world.

Therefore the one point we ought to remember is that we should always try to see the duty of others through their own eyes, and never judge the customs of other peoples by our own standards. I am not the standard of the universe. I have to accommodate myself to the world, and not the world to me. So we see that environments change the nature of our duties, and doing the duty which is ours at any particular time is the best thing we can do in this world. Let us do that duty which is ours by birth; and when we have done that, let us do the duty which is ours by our position in life and in society. There is, however, one great danger in human nature, viz., that man never examines himself. He thinks he is quite as fit to be on the throne as the king. Even if he is, he must first show that he has done the duty of his own position; and then higher duties will come to him. When we begin to work earnestly in the world, nature gives us blows right and left and soon enables us to find out our position. No man can long occupy satisfactorily a position for which he is not fit. There is no

use in grumbling against nature's adjustment. He who does the lower work is not therefore a lower man. No man is to be judged by the mere nature of his duties, but all should be judged by the manner and the spirit in which they perform them.

Later on we shall find that even this idea of duty undergoes change, and that the greatest work is done only when there is no selfish motive to prompt it. Yet it is work through the sense of duty that leads us to work without any idea of duty; when work will become worship — nay, something higher — then will work be done for its own sake. We shall find that the philosophy of duty, whether it be in the form of ethics or of love, is the same as in every other Yoga — the object being the attenuating of the lower self, so that the real higher Self may shine forth; to lessen the frittering away of energies on the lower plane of existence, so that the soul may manifest itself on the higher ones. This is accomplished by the continuous denial of low desires, which duty rigorously requires. The whole organisation of society has thus been developed consciously or unconsciously in the realms of action and experience, where, by limiting selfishness, we open the way to an unlimited expansion of the real nature of man

Do your duty.

Duty is seldom sweet. It is only when love greases its wheels that it runs smoothly; it is a continuous friction otherwise. How else could parents do their duties to their children, husbands to their wives and vice versa? Do we not meet with cases of friction every day in our lives? Duty is sweet only through love, and love shines in freedom alone. Yet is it freedom to be a slave to the senses, to anger, to jealousies and a hundred other petty things that must occur every day in human life? In all these little roughnesses that we meet with in life, the highest expression of freedom is to forbear. Women, slaves to their own irritable, jealous tempers, are apt to blame their husbands, and assert their own "freedom", as they think, not knowing that thereby they only prove that they are slaves. So it is wih husbands who eternally find fault with their wives.

Denial of low desires.

The only way to rise is by doing the duty next to us, and thus gathering strength go on until we reach the highest state. A young Sannyasin went to a forest; there he meditated, worshipped and practised Yoga for a long time. After years of hard work and practice, he was one day sitting under a tree, when some dry leaves fell upon his head. He looked up

A story — Sannyasin and housewife.

and saw a crow and a crane fighting on the top of the tree, which made him very angry. He said, "What! Dare you throw these dry leaves upon my head!" As with these words he angrily glanced at them a flash of fire went out of his head — such was the Yogin's power — and burnt the birds to ashes. He was very glad, almost overjoyed, at this development of power — he could burn the crow and the crane by a look. After a time he had to go to the town to beg his bread. He went, stood at a door and said, "Mother, give me food." A voice came from inside the house, "Wait a little, my son." The young man thought, "You wretched woman, how dare you make me wait! You do not know my power yet." While he was thinking thus the voice came again: "Boy, don't be thinking too much of yourself. Here is neither crow nor crane." He was astonished; still he had to wait. At last the woman came, and he fell at her feet and said, "Mother, how did you know that?" She said: "My boy, I do not know your Yoga or your practices. I am a common everyday woman. I made you wait because my husband is ill, and I was nursing him. All my life I have struggled to do my duty. When I was unmarried, I did my duty to my parents; now that I am married, I do my duty to my husband; that is all the Yoga I practise. But by doing my duty I

have become illumined; thus I could read your thoughts and know what you had done in the forest . . . . . "

Do not grumble.

It is the worker who is attached to results that grumbles about the nature of the duty which has fallen to his lot; to the unattached worker all duties are equally good, and form efficient instruments with which selfishness and sensuality may be killed, and the freedom of the soul secured. We are all apt to think too highly of ourselves. Our duties are determined by our deserts to a much larger extent than we are willing to grant. Competition rouses envy, and it kills the kindliness of the heart. To the grumbler all duties are distasteful; nothing will ever satisfy him, and his whole life is doomed to prove a failure. Let us work on, doing as we go whatever happens to be our duty, and being ever ready to put our shoulders to the wheel. Then surely we see the Light![1]

XI

WORK LIKE A MASTER

We read in the Bhagavad-Gita again and again that we must all work incessantly. All work is by nature composed of good and evil. We cannot do any work which will not do some good somewhere; there cannot be any work which will not do some harm somewhere. Every work must necessarily be a mixture of good and evil; yet we are commanded to work incessantly. Good and evil will both have their results, will produce their Karma. Good action will entail upon us good effect; bad action, bad. But good and bad are both bondages of the soul. The solution reached in the Gita in regard to this bondage-producing nature of work is, that if we do not attach ourselves to the work we do, it will not have any binding effect on our soul. We shall try to understand what is meant by this "non-attachment" to work.

Work incessantly.

As the tortoise tucks its feet and head inside the shell, and you may kill it and break it in pieces, and yet it will not come out, even so the character of that man who has con-

Unattached.

trol over his motives and organs is unchangeably established. He controls his own inner forces, and nothing can draw them out against his will. By this continuous reflex of good thoughts, good impressions moving over the surface of the mind, the tendency for doing good becomes strong, and as the result we feel able to control the Indriyas (the sense-organs, the nerve-centres). Thus alone will character be established, then alone a man gets to truth. Such a man is safe for ever; he cannot do any evil. You may place him in any company, there will be no danger for him. There is a still higher state than having this good tendency, and that is the desire for liberation. You must remember that freedom of the soul is the goal of all Yogas, and each one equally leads to the same result. By work alone men may get to where Buddha got largely by meditation or Christ by prayer. Buddha was a working Jnani, Christ was a Bhakta, but the same goal was reached by both of them. The bad tendencies are to be counteracted by the good ones, and the bad impressions on the mind should be removed by the fresh waves of good ones, until all that is evil almost disappears, or is subdued and held in control in a corner of the mind; but after that, the good tendencies have also to be conquered. Thus the "attached" becomes the "unattached". Work, but let not

the action or the thought produce a deep impression on the mind. Let the ripples come and go, let huge actions proceed from the muscles and the brain, but let them not make any deep impression on the soul.

How can this be done? We see that the impression of any action to which we attach ourselves, remains. I may meet hundreds of persons during the day, and among them meet also one whom I love; and when I retire at night I may try to think of all the faces I saw, but only that face comes before the mind — the face which I met perhaps only for one minute, and which I loved; all the others have vanished. My attachment to this particular person caused a deeper impression on my mind than all the other faces. Physiologically, the impressions have all been the same; every one of the faces that I saw pictured itself on the retina, and the brain took the pictures in, and yet there was no similarity of effect upon the mind. Most of the faces, perhaps, were entirely new faces, about which I had never thought before, but that one face of which I got only a glimpse found associations inside. Perhaps I had pictured him in my mind for years, knew hundreds of things about him, and this one new vision of him awakened hundreds of sleeping memories in my

How to do it.

mind and this one impression having been repeated perhaps a hundred times more than those of the different faces together, will produce a great effect on the mind.

Work like a master.

The whole gist of this teaching is that you should work like a master and not as a slave; work incessantly, but do not do slave's work. Do you not see how everybody works? Nobody can be altogether at rest; ninety-nine per cent of mankind work like slaves, and the result is misery; it is all selfish work. Work through freedom! Work through love! The word "love" is very difficult to understand; love never comes until there is freedom. There is no true love possible in the slave. If you buy a slave and tie him down in chains and make him work for you, he will work like a drudge, but there will be no love in him. So when we ourselves work for the things of the world as slaves, there can be no love in us, and our work is not true work. This is true of work done for relatives and friends, and is true of work done for our own selves. Selfish work is slave's work; and there is a test. Every act of love brings happiness; there is no act of love which does not bring peace and blessedness as its reaction. Real existence, real knowledge, and real love are eternally connected with one another, the

three in one ; where one of them is, the others also must be ; they are the three aspects of the One without a second — the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. When that existence becomes relative, we see it as the world ; that knowledge becomes in its turn modified into the knowledge of the things of the world ; and that bliss forms the foundation of all true love known to the heart of man. Therefore true love can never react so as to cause pain either to the lover or to the beloved. Suppose a man loves a woman ; he wishes to have her all to himself and feels extremely jealous about her every movement ; he wants her to sit near him, to stand near him, and to eat and move at his bidding. He is a slave to her and wishes to have her as his slave. That is not love ; it is a kind of morbid affection of the slave, insinuating itself as love. It cannot be love, because it is painful ; if she does not do what he wants, it brings him pain. With love there is no painful reaction ; love only brings a reaction of bliss ; if it does not, it is not love ; it is mistaking something else for love. When you have succeeded in loving your husband, your wife, your children, the whole world, the universe, in such a manner that there is no reaction of pain or jealousy, no selfish feeling, then you are in a fit state to be unattached.

Do you ask anything from your children in return for what you have given them? It is your duty to work for them, and there the matter ends. In whatever you do for a particular person, a city, or a state, assume the same attitude towards it as you have towards your children — expect nothing in return. If you can invariably take the position of a giver, in which everything given by you is a free offering to the world, without any thought of return, then will your work bring you no attachment. Attachment comes only where we expect a return.

Don't expect.

If working like slaves results in selfishness and attachment, working as masters of our own mind gives rise to the bliss of non-attachment. We often talk of right and justice, but we find that in the world right and justice are mere baby's talk. There are two things which guide the conduct of men: might and mercy. The exercise of might is invariably the exercise of selfishness. All men and women try to make the most of whatever power or advantage they have. Mercy is heaven itself; to be good, we have all to be merciful. Even justice and right should stand on mercy. All thought of obtaining return for the work we do hinders our spiritual progress; nay, in

Results in bliss.

the end it brings misery. There is another way in which this idea of mercy and sefless charity can be put into practice; that is, by looking upon work as "worship" in case we believe in a Personal God. Here we give up all the fruits of our work unto the Lord, and, worshipping Him thus, we have no right to expect anything from mankind for the work we do. The Lord Himself works incessantly and is ever without attachment. Just as water cannot wet the lotus leaf, so work cannot bind the unselfish man by giving rise to attachment to results. The selfless and unattached man may live in the very heart of a crowded and sinful city; he will not be touched by sin.

The story of the mongoose.

This idea of complete self-sacrifice is illustrated in the following story:—After the battle of Kurukshetra the five Pandava brothers performed a great sacrifice and made very large gifts to the poor. All people expressed amazement at the greatness and richness of the sacrifice, and said that such a sacrifice the world had never seen before. But, after the ceremony, there came a little mongoose, half of whose body was golden, and the other half brown, and he began to roll on the floor of the sacrificial hall. He said to those around, "You are all liars;

this is no sacrifice." "What!" they exclaimed, "You say this is no sacrifice; do you not know how money and jewels were poured out to the poor and every one became rich and happy? This was the most wonderful sacrifice any man ever performed." But the mongoose said: "There was once a little village, and in it there dwelt a poor Brahmin, with his wife, his son and his son's wife. They were very poor and lived on small gifts made to them for preaching and teaching. There came in that land a three years' famine, and the poor Brahmin suffered more than ever. At last when the family had starved for days, the father brought home one morning a little barley flour, which he had been fortunate enough to obtain, and he divided it into four parts, one for each member of the family. They prepared it for their meal, and just as they were about to eat there was a knock at the door. The father opened it, and there stood a guest. Now in India a guest is a sacred person; he is as a god for the time being, and must be treated as such. So the poor Brahmin said, '.Come in, sir; you are welcome.' He set before the guest his own portion of the food, which the guest quickly ate and said, 'Oh, sir, you have killed me; I have been starving for ten days, and this little bit has but increased my hunger.' Then the wife said to her husband, 'Give him my

share,' but the husband said, 'Not so.' The wife however insisted, saying, 'Here is a poor man, and it is our duty as householders to see that he is fed, and it is my duty as a wife to give him my portion, seeing that you have no more to offer him.' Then she gave her share to the guest, which he ate, and said he was still burning with hunger. So the son said, 'Take my portion also ; it is the duty of a son to help his father to fulfil his obligations.' The guest ate that, but remained still unsatisfied ; so the son's wife gave him her portion also. That was sufficient, and the guest departed blessing them. That night those four people died of starvation. A few granules of that flour had fallen on the floor, and when I rolled my body on them half of it became golden, as you see. Since then I have been travelling all over the world, hoping to find another sacrifice like that, but nowhere have I found one ; nowhere else has the other half of my body been turned into gold. That is why I say this is no sacrifice."

This idea of charity is going out of India ; great men are becoming fewer and fewer.

Now you see what Karma-Yoga means ; even at the point of death to help any one, without asking questions. Be cheated millions of times and never ask a question, and never think of what you are

doing. Never vaunt of your gifts to the poor or expect their gratitude, but rather be grateful to them for giving you the occasion of practising charity to them.[1]

APPENDIX

The references are to THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA, MAYAVATI MEMORIAL EDITION, published by the Advaita Ashrama, 1962, and after. The Roman numbers refer to the volumes and the figures to the pages.

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